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THE
JESUIT
AT
CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. II.

THE
J E S U I T
AT
C A M B R I D G E.

BY
S I R G E O R G E S T E P H E N .

"But it is not the lye that passeth through the mind, but the lye that
sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt."

BACON'S ESSAYS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE
JESUIT AT CAMBRIDGE.

CHAPTER I.

"Si eadem consulis, frater, quæ affirmas, consulenti debetur reverentia, cum non debeatur fides affirmanti."

"Brother, if that which you set down as an assertion, you would deliver by way of advice, there were reverence due to your counsel, whereas faith is not due to your affirmation."

LORD BACON.

SUCH was the substance of poor Lawrence's incoherent tale. I need hardly say how deeply it affected me. My own interests were so completely interwoven with his case, that I felt we must rise or fall together, and the feeling induced a cordiality of regard which I had never

previously experienced towards him. Nothing is so intelligible as true sympathy, and he shewed that he was perfectly sensible of my warmer tone.

“Can anything save me?” he asked, as he grasped my hand.

“You should have included me in the question; and not only me, but the poor girls who are thus sacrificed to a Jesuit’s intrigues. But you have omitted one circumstance: did Farquhar leave the Glen with you?”

“No. I have not seen him since. I left him there, obviously ambitious of supplanting you with Cecilia.”

“I suspected as much,” I moodily replied.

“Oh! as for that, you need not fear: she cordially despises him; and for his part, he only loves her fortune.”

“Yet he maintains his ground with her father, as I know to my cost!”

“To be sure he does. He shewed himself more pliant even than I; and, after all, Stanley,

though I do suffer for my apostasy, can you say that I am wrong?"

"Yes; and hereafter I will convince you; but we will not talk of it now. I am not sufficiently calm myself—much less are you; but I have a proposal to make. You are miserable here; you ought not to be alone. I have engaged again the lodgings which we occupied before we went to Paris, for I expect my parents every hour. Come home with me."

At first, he had a hundred objections to make: his papers—his state of health—above all, his new religious duties—all made it impracticable; but at length he yielded, and, after much persuasion, I brought him away to Dover Street. On our way, I asked him where Agnes was, but he assured me that he did not know. The last communication that he had had with her was the letter that has been mentioned, and that arrived from Dover, where she was then staying with her mother. This surprised me,

for I had concluded that Mrs. Harrison had accompanied her husband to the continent ; but he told me that Cecilia alone had gone with him. “And where then is Cecilia?” On this point, too, he was entirely ignorant. I was equally anxious to learn by what means he had traced Harrison to Marseilles, as all my own efforts had failed to find him.

“He travelled from Paris to Italy, under an assumed name ; but his reason for doing so involves a family secret that I dare not disclose, for I should never have learned it but for my engagement to Agnes. Our rupture does not release me from the obligation of honour.” Of course I could no longer press him.

With all the burthens upon my mind—coolly regarded, if not actually thrown off by Cecilia—at variance with her father—ignorant of their abode—and proscribed by “conditions” which would, of course, be as strictly imposed on me as on Lawrence—a rival too, though a

despicable one, in high confidence with the arbiter of her destiny,—I scarcely needed the further anxiety entailed upon me by the charge of Lawrence, under circumstances so painful and so difficult ; but I was bent upon reconciling him both to his father and to Agnes, and it proved a relief to my troubled mind to find occupation in this difficult task, in which I was well assured of the active co-operation of my parents. How I longed for their arrival ! It was possible that they might reach town the same evening, and I had hurried Lawrence to Dover Street as soon as he had assented to my proposal. I remained at the window as long as there was sufficient light to see a carriage approach ; and then, in my impatience, I left Lawrence on the sofa, falling off into the slumber which his opiate was sure to produce, and walked into the street to watch every travelling equipage that entered Piccadilly.

I had spent half an hour in promenading up and down the pavement, eagerly observing every

carriage with post-horses, in the hope of retognising our own, when constant disappointment determined me to return to my lodging, and exhaust my patience at the fireside, in preference to the dirty, crowded pavement.

Just as I was turning round the corner into Dover Street, I saw a stage drive up to Hatchett's Hotel; it was an incident of every five minutes at that time, and therefore in no way calculated to excite curiosity; but an idle, anxious, and expecting loungee, finds food for curiosity in every street bustle, and few scenes are more pregnant with bustle and confusion than used to be the arrival of a well-laden "long" coach at such a house as Hatchett's. It was a Dover coach, and I observed it with more interest when I read the name. While intent on the scrambling of porters and shoeless lads, quarrelling for the sixpence to be earned by calling a coach and shifting luggage, intermixed with a few equally vigilant for an opportunity of stealing, I was startled by a voice that I did

not recognise, "Surely that is Mr. Stanley?" Nor, when I discovered the speaker, by his respectfully touching his hat, could I immediately recollect him. He saw my perplexity.

"You remember, Sir, that I came back in the gig for master's writing-case that he left at Cambridge?" And I identified him as Harrison's servant.

"Where have you left your master?"

"He's on the continent, Sir. I can't speak French, and was left behind with my mistress."

"With Mrs. Harrison? How is she?"

"Very bad, Sir."

"Good gracious! what's the matter, John?"

"Matter enough, I fear, Sir; but I don't know her complaint: only I'm sent up here with a letter for Dr. Bailey, and I'm to go there directly, which is why I took the liberty of stopping you, Sir, for it has no address, and I did not find that out till I got to Dartford. They are such sharps about these places, that I

don't like to ask 'em a civil question—and that's the truth, Sir."

I did not hesitate as to my course; I resolved to go with him myself, in the hope that I might elicit something more from Dr. Bailey when he had read the letter. I therefore took the man to my lodgings, calling there to see whether Lawrence was still asleep, and to leave a message in case of the arrival of my family. Lawrence remained in the state in which I had left him, as he had prepared me to expect, and I hurried on to Dr. Bailey's.

We have no physician of the present day who enjoys such a reputation as was possessed by this very distinguished man. Science has made large strides in the medical profession as well as in every other learned pursuit; but while the accumulated knowledge of the age is doubtless greater, it may be questioned whether any individual in modern times has monopolized so great a share of practical, personal experience.

He was gifted, too, with a quality often more valuable in his profession than even experience ; he combined great kindness with great good sense. I have often witnessed pre-eminent skill, not accompanied by either the one or the other.

He read the letter with attention, though we had intruded upon him at his dinner, and then inquired if I had brought it from Dover.

“I am only a friend of the family, and meeting their servant by accident at the coach, heard his errand with an anxiety that induced me to come here with him.”

“She seems to be ill, Sir—very ill ; but there is nothing in this letter to take me to Dover to-night. I shall wait for to-morrow’s post : if there is no letter for me then, I shall go.”

“Permit me to ask, do you apprehend danger?”

“If I did, and thought I could relieve her, I should go to-night.”

“I am expecting friends to-night who will be deeply interested about her. What may I say to them?”

“That they shall hear from me if occasion requires, and not to be alarmed till they do.”

Nor could I obtain more from him, though I offered to be the immediate messenger if he wished to send any urgent directions. He smiled, as he answered that he never confided his duties to a deputy, much less to a youth; and his smile reassured me more than any opinion he could have given, notwithstanding the “disparagement to my years.” After availing myself of the opportunity to consult him about Lawrence, I left him.

I found, from the servant, that Agnes was in attendance on her mother, but his master and Cecilia were still on the continent, and their return not even expected.

Here was a melancholy addition to all my anxieties ! The reader will not have forgotten that my reception by Mrs. Harrison, when she came to us immediately after Cyril's death, had been most cordial and affectionate. She had then predicted that we should speedily meet again ; but, though months had elapsed, we had not since seen each other, and, considering what I had suffered in the interval, through her husband's persecution, and by Farquhar's instrumentality, it was not probable that we should again meet on terms of mutual pleasure. Yet I anxiously desired it, for I had long entertained one of those presentiments for which human sagacity never can account, that it must be through her good offices alone that I could ever re-establish myself on my old terms of familiarity with her family, and thus find an opportunity of regaining Cecilia.

I reached Dover Street in no very cheerful frame of mind, and I found nothing there to

relieve it, for Lawrence still continued sleeping. Assisted by Mrs. Harrison's servant, I removed him to his bed; nor was I sorry that he did not awake till the following morning, for at a late hour the long-desired arrival of the carriage was announced, and in a minute after I was locked in my dear mother's arms, and only released to alternate the embraces with my sisters.

“And where is my father?”

“Not yet returned to England, for, thank God, he knows nothing of your misfortunes.”

“How did you first hear of them?”

“From your own letter.” And she then proceeded to give me a narrative of all that had followed my mysterious disappearance on the day of my arrest. Their first impression was natural,—that I had met with a fatal accident; but after most minute inquiry had removed this gloomy apprehension, Agnes was the first to suggest that I had in all probability fallen on

the track of her father and Cecilia, and had instantly set off in pursuit of them, leaving some letter of explanation that had miscarried; that, as I had reason to suppose that my mother had decided on an immediate return to England, I should probably address my letters there, and consequently that it would be expedient to adhere to that plan as likely to lead to the earliest intelligence. They decided upon this course, and, on passing through Dover, fell in with Mrs. Harrison, whose stay there was as much a surprise to Agnes, as it had been to myself when Lawrence mentioned it. Agnes remained with her mother, while my family prosecuted their journey homewards.

When we had mutually exchanged the tale of our late adventures, my mother, with the promptitude of genuine kindness—generally a more active impulse with woman than ourselves—declared her intention of accompanying Dr. Bailey to Dover, if he found it necessary to

go there. I was indeed most grateful for this energetic benevolence. She would not unpack her luggage, that all might be ready for an immediate journey. By the arrival of the post the following morning, she was at the Doctor's house in her carriage. There was no letter, and faithful to his promise, Dr. Bailey accompanied her at once.

I must interrupt these details to resume my narrative of poor Lawrence, and wretched indeed was his state when he at length awoke, free from the soothing, yet pernicious, influence of the opiate. At first, he seemed scarcely conscious of what had passed, or where, or in whose company he found himself. He was, for a brief interval, semi-delirious; but then came returning recollection, and with it, throbbing temples, nervous agitation, and a craving for the deleterious stimulant. I set my face resolutely against it; I would not listen to his piteous entreaties, or exhibit the least compassion for

his state, deeply as I commiserated it; on the contrary, I insisted on his taking a draught which I had obtained on Dr. Bailey's prescription the previous evening, and began a system of discipline, both mental and bodily, which he had recommended, until he could see him personally on his return from Dover. This was not till the third day after his departure with my mother; nor did he bring with him any report calculated to allay my anxiety about Mrs. Harrison.

“She is alive; but God alone can foresee the end. Her case is malignant typhus.”

This was all he said, referring me to my mother for further particulars. With Lawrence, however, he was more successful, and the patient soon began to show signs of returning strength, but not of returning spirits. I had purposely concealed from him the cause of my mother's absence while my sisters remained; but I made it my business to obtain for him a daily bulletin

of his father's health ; and the eagerness with which he watched the hour of its arrival from Highgate, of itself operated as a useful stimulant.

We were seated round the fire one evening, when he had shewn more animation than usual, and he abruptly asked me,

“Stanley, do you think my father would see me?”

“I have no doubt of it; but at present I shall not allow you to see him.”

“Your reason?”

“Because it will do you both more harm than good, till you can meet on former terms.”

“On former terms! Why that can never be, my kind friend.”

“I am not so sure of *that*.”

He regarded me with a fixed look for some moments, but without that desponding wildness that he had betrayed at our first interview at his lodgings, and I augured well from

it; nor did his next remark at all belie the omen.

“Surely you cannot suppose, Stanley, that I can apostatize again?”

“I am by no means satisfied that you have apostatized already.”

“What *can* you mean? Certainly I have not openly professed the Roman faith; but I have avowed my conviction, and I have no intention to retract.”

“You refused to seek admission into orders in the English church, when this condition was required by your instructor in that faith. Why did you refuse?”

“How can you ask such a question? How could I comply, with honour?”

“Yet answer me—why did you refuse?”

“Because it was expected of me that, under the vestments of a Protestant priest, I should disseminate the doctrines of another creed.”

“Well, and if you believed those doctrines to

be not only sound, but essential to salvation, was not this your duty?"

"I am angry with your catechism. The devil is the father of lies, and God can work out his own purpose without the devil's help."

"Was not Balaam, in heart, a tool of the devil?"

"Yes; but he was compelled to bless, though he came to curse."

"But of course you could have obtained a dispensation?"

"And how would that satisfy my conscience?"

"Conscience must be silent where the vicar of Christ absolves."

"I believe that I do wrong," he answered, shaking his head with a sorrowful look of doubt, "I believe that I do wrong even in discussing such points with a layman, and one whom I am bound to consider a heretic."

"That is the *rôle* of every weak religionist :

did you not discuss your faith with Harrison ?
Then why not with me ?”

“ Harrison seldom trenched on points like these.”

“ Then how did he convince you ?”

“ He proved to me that the Church of Rome could be the only true church, because it is only there that the power of transmitting the Holy Spirit, received by the Apostles at our Saviour’s hands, is inherent.

Even my little sister Mary was able to correct him on this point, and interposed with her sweet shrill voice :

“ You forget, Mr. Lawrence ; Jesus Christ breathed on the Apostles when he said, ‘ Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ He did not lay hands upon them.”

Lawrence was affected by the child’s earnest correction, and kissed her as he answered,

“ Quite right, Mary.”

My eldest sister was arrived at womanhood,

and had hitherto refrained from taking 'part in the conversation, thinking, as I wish all other young ladies thought, that controversial theology was not within the feminine department ; but she could not resist interposing a remark, though not without a blush of timidity :

“ We have no evidence in Scripture that St. Paul himself received formal ordination, unless from the prophets and teachers at Antioch, who laid their hands on him and Barnabas ; but only, as Doddridge supposes, for some particular duty. Where St. Paul vindicates his Apostolic authority, he tells the Galatians that he was an Apostle, “ not of man, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ.” Yet there were twelve Apostles at the time of his conversion still existing. The inference seems to be reasonable, that no Apostolic or Presbyterian imposition of hands, nor any outward ceremony, was essential to ordination.”

Lawrence listened with attention, but felt that

even the girls were drawing him out of his depth, and, turning to me, proceeded,

“But holy inspiration, whatever might be the symbol of the gift, or the form of ordaining, must descend through the channel appointed to convey it.”

“I do not agree with you even there; for Judas Iscariot was ordained with the rest of the twelve; yet I think you will hardly contend that a church founded by him, had any such existed, could be now regarded as the true church, through which the tradition of ordination could descend.”

“Judas Iscariot resisted the spirit of God, and therefore threw away the gift.”

“How do you know that?”

“By his subsequent acts, and by the words of Christ himself—‘It had been better for that man had he never been born.’”

“Then observe the inference; a man’s acts are to prove whether he has thrown away or

retains the gift of the Holy Spirit. If this principle applies to one who, as we know, was chosen and ordained by our Saviour himself, is it not yet more reasonably applicable to those who claim it only through a long succession of Vicars Apostolic, of whom, to say the least of them, there have been as many bad as good? But I deny your major. You have not satisfied me that the holy inspiration has descended even through the Church of Rome."

"You might as well ask me to prove that the sun shines at noon-day. The fact of such succession is notorious."

"Notorious! Are you not aware that this "notorious" fact has been openly controverted, and by men of most learned character, for at least one hundred and thirty years?"

"I was not aware of it; but I know that Irenæus, who was Bishop of Lyons about the year 178, states, 'we can furnish a list of those who were by the Apostles constituted Bishops

in the churches, and of their successors unto ourselves,' and then, excusing himself for omitting to give the list, on account of its great length, observes, 'But we show how the tradition of the Church founded and established at Rome, by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, the greatest and most ancient Church, and known to all, that tradition which it has from the Apostles, has come down to us through successions of Bishops'; and, giving a list of twelve Bishops of Rome, he says, 'In this order and in this doctrine, both the tradition preserved in the Church from the Apostles, and the preaching of the truth, have come down to us.'"

"The passage has been often quoted. Much stress was laid upon it by Dr. Hoadly, afterwards Bishop Hoadly, in his defence of Episcopal Ordination, published in 1707; yet it is not conclusive with me. How does the order of Roman Bishops begin—according to Irenæus?"

"With Linus, Anacletus, and Clement."

“ Well, and Eusebius agrees with Irenæus as to the order, but avers that Linus received the Episcopate after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. Tertullian, cotemporary with Irenæus, varies the order of succession, and says that Clement was made Bishop of Rome by Peter, and of course was the first Bishop. Augustine again varies this order, and gives the succession of Linus, Clement, and Anacletus. Hence we have four equal authorities who only concur in one point, that Clement was, at some time or other, Bishop of Rome.”

“ And is not that sufficient ?”

“ Certainly not, where such important consequences are made to depend on the accuracy of this fact ; for remember, if there is a chasm, for only a single year, or even an hour, there ends the whole theory of Apostolic succession. Now, of all these four authorities, Eusebius is the only one who affects to give dates, and by him, Clement’s appointment to the Episcopacy

is fixed in the twelfth year of Domitian, which was long subsequent to the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. Clement himself, too, in writing to the Church at Corinth from the Church of Rome, after the martyrdom of the two Apostles, to which he alludes, makes no mention either of himself or of any other Bishop of Rome; a very improbable omission, if he, or any other, held that high office when he wrote.* Now then, my dear Lawrence, what can you still say for the ‘notoriety’ of your essential fact?”

“But,” proceeded Lawrence, evading a reply to my question, though I could perceive that he was staggered by a view of the subject which

* This collation of the authority of the Fathers is briefly taken from a work entitled “An Inquiry into the Scriptural View of the Constitution of a Christian Church, &c.,” by W. A. Garratt, Esq. lately published by Seeley: a book scarcely more remarkable for the Christian meekness and modesty of its tone on a subject of religious controversy, than for its close reasoning and learned research, and eminent in both respects.

had never before presented itself to him, “ trifling discrepancies are not to be fatal to the credit of the Fathers.”

“ Certainly not ; for it is chiefly on the evidence of the Fathers, and especially of the Apostolic Fathers, that historical proof of the authenticity of the New Testament itself depends ; but it is not unwarrantable to assume that a fact, which if true becomes of such vast practical importance from the use made of it, would not have remained for the eighteenth century to discover, unaided by the most unequivocal testimony of those fathers. So far are they, however, from being of one accord on this important point, that St. Jerome positively affirms that episcopacy was instituted throughout the Christian world simultaneously, and that previously to its institution all the churches were governed by Presbyteries ; an opinion in which Bishop Stillingfleet* concurs, in his *Irenicum*, 325, where

* Stillingfleet published his *Irenicum* at the early age of twenty-five, and a second edition a few years after.

he shows that in small churches, where there was no great probability of increase, there was at first only a pastor settled, with deacons; and in larger churches, a college of Presbyters to govern by their joint counsels. Thus then, according to St. Jerome, and in the opinion of a very learned prelate of our own, an opinion shared by Cranmer, Whitgift, Hooker, Hales, Chillingworth, and many other pious and learned men, there was a considerable gap in the epis-

It must in candour be admitted that, to a certain extent, Stillingfleet in later life acknowledged, according to Burnet, that there were matters in his *Irenicum* which he would not, on more mature consideration, have published. But I am not aware that he carried recantation farther than this: and with his acknowledged character for piety, zeal, and honest candour, it may be presumed that he would not have been satisfied with such a vague retractation of error, had he been sensible that, substantially, he was wrong in his theory of Church Government.

copal, or, if you prefer the term, the apostolical succession ; and I repeat, that if a link in the chain be wanting, the tradition is imperfect, and for ever gone. Nor, I own, am I quite satisfied that, even if the chain were proved to be as perfect as it at present seems imperfect, the fact of “ tradition ” by any form of divine acknowledgment, could be established. The church at Alexandria was founded by St. Mark ; yet in that church, for a long period, the Prime Presbyter was selected by the Presbytery. The “ Institution of a Christian man,” subscribed by the clergy in convocation, declares Bishops and Presbyters to be identified by Scripture ; and the Presbyters were appointed by their respective congregations. In the Apostolic Canons I., which are quoted by the Council of Nice A.D. 325, and their authority recognised, it is provided that a Bishop shall be ordained by three Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. When an apostle was elected in the place of Judas, it was not by any corporeal

act of the other Apostles, equivalent to the imposition of hands, but by lot; and it is remarkable that the same word, “κληρωσων,” is used by Eusebius in the account which he emphatically quotes from Clement of Alexandria, of the Apostle John when, after leaving Patmos, he “*appointed*” to the ministry some that were pointed out by the Holy Ghost. We are warranted in inferring that even the holy Apostles did not assume to hand down by their own corporeal act the same Holy Spirit which inspired themselves, but only to select those who were indicated by lot to have received the Spirit directly from above; yet the “tradition” insisted on as the basis of Apostolic succession, must mean this, or it means nothing. My sister’s remark about St. Paul, agrees with this view.”

Lawrence remained silent. My object was not disputation, but conviction; and therefore I refrained from breaking the silence, till my eldest

sister, who had listened with attention to all that was said, abruptly asked him,

“Do you call my kind mamma a heretic, Mr. Lawrence?”

“Never, my dear Miss Stanley.”

“But she does not think as you do, I am quite sure; yet even the Rector says that she does quite as much good to his parish as he can, though he does nothing but preach and visit his parishioners.”

“And she is on an angel’s visit now,” I inadvertently exclaimed.

Lawrence’s attention was excited, and he asked me to explain myself.

“Not at present; she will tell you herself when she comes back to us, and then she will aid my argument.”

His silence, however, was not wrought by conviction; he was only puzzling out a plausible rejoinder.

“Would you exact more stringent proof of the unbroken succession then, of the New Testament itself? You cannot bring up the writing of the Apostles to their own pens; nor even to cotemporaneous date: how can we expect closer evidence regarding their corporeal acts?”

“Your remark is more ingenious than just: there is this essential difference between the two cases; the whole value of the theory of tradition depends on its actual traceability to Christ himself, or personally to St. Paul; for, if not so traceable, or at least to the Pentecost, *cadet questio*, as there exists no record of any other authenticated inspiration of the Apostles. Now it is observable, that there is no fact in connexion with the Apostles so well established as this holy authority for their mission. It is specifically mentioned by all the Evangelists, and St. John especially reports our Saviour’s emphatic declaration: “I have chosen you and *ordained* you that you should go.” We cannot suppose

that a fact, at least equally important, the inheritance by tradition of this sacred ordination, by hundreds of thousands of men, through eighteen centuries of succession, a fact (upon *your* hypothesis) involving the authority on which the gospel was to be preached to all the nations of the earth, should have been left without scriptural attestation, or scriptural guidance as to the solemnities to be observed in *tradendo*, had the necessity for such tradition ever been contemplated by our Divine Master.

“Hence it is fair to infer that it was no part of the Sacred Economy; the fountain was sanctified; the stream in which the holy water flowed, was permitted to make its own channel. But as regards the sacred writings, they, from the nature of the case, cannot have been coeval with the first establishment of the Christian Churches. The testimonies to the great truth on which they were founded, were necessarily

oral, not written. Our Saviour appeared to St. Paul in person, that he, as well as the older Apostles, might be able to ‘*preach* that which he had *seen*:’ the first converts were to be made by word of mouth, and the visible display of miraculous gifts: nor was it till they multiplied and spread over distant places, that it became essential to put on record, for the instruction of brethren who were scattered in all directions, those mighty works, and pre-excellent discourses and commandments, that were designed to keep them all as one Church, in one uniform system of faith and practice.

“Some years must have elapsed before a Christian public could be created, to found a necessity for Christian publications; but we do find that the evidence of their authenticity, corresponds in date with the very period when, alone, such evidence could arise. Quotations of passages from the New Testament are made

by Polycarp, one of the earliest of the Apostolical Fathers, in his only extant work, the "Epistle to the Philippians; and Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle John. Ignatius, who, according to St. Chrysostom, was personally acquainted with several of the Apostles, has frequent references to particular texts and books in the New Testament, in those epistles which even controversialists admit to be genuine. Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, in the second century, Origen in the third, and Eusebius in the fourth, bear witness in their writings, that most of the books in the New Testament which our canons acknowledge, were similarly acknowledged in their times, and by their predecessors.

"We must also recollect that these books were written at different times—by different authors and in different places: hence, when printing was unknown, many years would elapse before

copies became so numerous as to allow of their being collected together in one volume ; but when so collected, their perfect concordance with each other, in facts, in command, and in doctrine, furnished of itself abundantly sufficient evidence of their inspired authorship ; and more particularly, at a day so early that there still existed men who could test them by their own personal recollections of conversations with the Apostles themselves. In truth we have no better authority, and in most cases, not half so good, for the genuineness of the works which we ascribe to Cicero or Pliny, or any other profane writer of antiquity.*

* In a work like this, it would be out of place to burthen the text with notes and quotations ; but the controversial reader will find my authority for every word in " Archbishop Wake's *Translations of the Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*," 1710. Nor can I resist the temptation to advert to an inquiry which I have often heard, " what has become of the originals of

“ And yet there is an innate propriety, a sort of natural and dignified simplicity in the idea of those narratives and epistles which form our New Testament ?” It might fairly be presumed, *a priori*, that documents of such infinite importance would have been preserved with a custodial fidelity, as much directed by holy inspiration as their authorship ; but I think a little reflection will prove such a presumption to be fallacious. Had the originals themselves descended to our time, two most dangerous consequences would probably have followed : first, they might have been garbled or interpolated by the custodes themselves, to suit the purposes of religious bigotry or over-zealous controversialists : and even if they escaped this danger, constant and most mischievous dispute would have arisen as to the accuracy of copies, and we should have been left destitute of any version so well authenticated and so universally acknowledged, as to supersede the necessity of perpetual reference to the original ; indeed, the very possession of the originals would have been sufficient *causa belli*, from the influence that they would confer on their guardians, with all the world ; free access to them would have become matter of international treaty and holy alliances ; and supposititious

Apostolic succession, that makes me loth to abandon it."

"Take care that you do not confound two very distinct things, in your anxiety to uphold a favorite fancy; a fancy which, as you admit, has led you far astray, and involved you in domestic calamity of no ordinary severity?"

"Well, well, go on: I had rather listen to you than to myself, at present. What is my mistake?"

"A succession of dignified, or, if you please, copies would have been as plentiful as haws in November. I believe that all traces of the original documents are lost in the wreck of ages: and in this view, their loss is an advantage gained; nor is it unworthy of remark, that the uninterrupted tradition of the originals, from hand to hand, would in all probability have been a fact as frequently and as warmly agitated as apostolic succession; and thus the world would have been kept in perpetual uncertainty and controversy, upon a point on which, of all others, the interests of the Christian Church required that general harmony which has now obtained for eighteen centuries."

episcopal rulers of the Church, is a truly natural, and justly fascinating idea. I am not aware that the fact has ever been denied by those whose opinions are worth anything. Every well-ordered state, whether public or private, whether political or religious, must be *governed*, if it would be prosperous or peaceful. But the fact of governing is one thing, the authority for governing is another. And if you, in this case, insist on the succession of the authority as necessarily divine, you entail on it that right of infallibility, which has been the boasted foundation of Roman supremacy, and revive that slavery to forms and ceremonies from which Christ came to deliver us. You again bind down the conscience to the bulls of Popes, and decrees of Councils, the mainstays of a Pharisaical priesthood. You help to restore a bondage of which the last shackles were broken by the reformation. Conscience, not a ritual, and conscience enlightened by his gospel, was the test of faith appointed by our Saviour and enforced by his Apostles.

“Under Cromwell’s protectorate, our country was triumphant in arms, and, in many respects, well ordered : the succession of governing power was maintained, though the right of succession was broken ; and the illustration is *à propos*, for Cromwell, as the supreme head *de facto*, though self-constituted, appointed bishops, in one instance, certainly,—I think in more than one ; and thus, so far as respects our Church, a decided interruption of Apostolic succession was occasioned.

I may go yet further ; since the papal supremacy was repudiated in these realms, the Sovereign has, of right, appointed every episcopal ruler, without deigning to claim any delegated authority from the Roman pontiff ; and thus for three centuries, there has been, not an unbroken chain of Apostolic succession, but a gulf which none can pass. And even in the Roman church, there has been confusion equally at variance with the doctrine. John XXIII., Gregory XII., and Benedict XIII., all

enjoyed the tiara together in 1409. Through which of them has the tradition descended? I repeat it, the decorum of a long line of succession in Episcopal or Presbyterian rule, is one thing, and very different from the assertion of its exclusive and hereditary right, as resulting from traditional inspiration."

"Can it admit of a doubt," replied Lawrence, "that to regulate the forms and even the decorum of the Christian Churches, in their infant state more especially, the authority of inspired rulers was indispensable? The very minuteness with which St. Paul writes to the Church at Corinth, directing the order in which the gifts of prophecy and tongues were to be exercised, and even descending to the limits within which females might interfere, seems to establish the necessity of such holy superintendence."

"I have admitted the necessity of such church government: I have only denied that the necessity involves special inspiration of the ruler; but

I thank you for the instance, for it recalls to me a remark of the learned as well as pious Doddridge, on this very epistle: that neither St. Paul nor the Apostolic Father, Clement, would have felt it becoming to enter upon such details of church discipline, in their epistles to the Corinthians, had that church been under the spiritual guidance of its own episcopal authority: the inference is irresistible, that here was one of the earliest Christian Churches, left destitute, even in the days of the Apostles themselves, of individual or personal episcopacy—yet who will question its recognition as an independent Church?”

Here Lawrence expressed his wish to suspend the argument, not because he felt it,—as I fear my readers may,—a substitute for his accustomed opiate; but on the contrary, because it led to the bitter and agitating reflection, that whether he was right or wrong in his new principles, he had given in his adhesion to

them, with but little of that severe examination which so solemn a step required: he was agitated and disturbed. The doctor had foreseen the recurrence of such casual paroxysms, and had permitted me, under such circumstances, slightly to increase the opiate. It is a sad spectacle, when an ordinary exercise of the intellect produces a morbid excitement which laudanum only can allay; yet such was the wretched case of an amiable and healthy young man, devoured by remorse for those dreadful consequences to which his ill-advised, hurried, and selfish secession from his Church had led.*

* The reader will perceive that it is not convenient to introduce into the narrative itself, a nice discrimination of the varieties of opinion entertained on the subject of Apostolic Succession; but I believe that there are many who, while they maintain the doctrine to its full Tractarian extent, stop short of the assumption of "infallibility," which I have contended to be a necessary

and inevitable corollary. I cannot but think that those who confine their faith within such limits, are, in their hearts, more anxious to uphold a theory that invests our clergy with a very unnecessary pomp of sanctity and sacerdotal influence, than to test truth by boldly facing its consequences. I cannot understand how any conscientious and truly honest Christian, can at once acknowledge the exclusive enjoyment of the presence of the Holy Spirit in a given Church, by a kind of corporeal investiture, and yet withhold from that Church absolute infallibility: it is mere special pleading to back out of the difficulty by answering that even the apostles themselves erred at times; it is not a question of impeccability, but of infallibility. Peter and Barnabas were censured by Paul, not for error of doctrine, but for timidity in practice that led to an act of "dissimulation." (2 Gal. ii.) We have no instance on record of any of the apostles being charged by each other, with the inculcation of *errors in faith*: they were sent to preach the Gospel to all the world, and they received the Holy Ghost to qualify them for the mission; it seems a contradiction in terms, to admit that their teaching was thus inspired, to contend even for the tradition of this inspiration, and yet simultaneously to grant that these holy men were capable of error, and did err in the very

instruction which they gave by aid and impulse of the same Spirit. But there is no incongruity in saying, that as men they might sin, though as inspired teachers, they could not err. St. Paul himself avows this liability to sin, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and winds up a very particular description of human nature, as drawn from his examination of his own character, with these remarkable words: "So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin." It is or it is *not* the fact, that the Holy Spirit exists in our priesthood, by virtue of apostolic *tradition* through the Church of Rome. If it exist, it has the same unerring, infallible character now that it possessed at first: God is unchangeable, and the Holy Spirit is God. He once deigned to speak even by the mouth of an ass; and when he did so speak, his voice was as unerring as when he spoke from Mount Sinai. I cannot understand that there is less reason to defer implicitly to the same authority, because we certainly, at times, do hear the words of the Spirit from forms, though biped, as little deserving our respect, if apostolic tradition *has* handed that Spirit down through Apostolic Succession: but if this is just reasoning, then it follows that the Spirit is infallible in the Church of Rome, by undoubted seniority of title. If, on the

other hand, it is *not* the fact that such is the virtue of apostolic tradition, then there is no controversy connected with it worth a single sheet of the paper that has been wasted upon it. *Cadet questio* with all sensible men. We have either discovered an infallible Church, or a mare's nest; and I challenge escape from this dilemma. It results that the honest proselyte to the Tractarian views of "apostolic succession," can no longer hesitate openly to profess the faith of the Church of Rome. Are some of my Cambridge friends prepared for this?

It may be replied by many, "You have misapprehended our meaning; neither we nor the Tractarians acknowledge more than a transmission by apostolic tradition, of apostolic *authority* to administer the sacred offices of the Church, and to ordain others to the same holy trust." I am perfectly aware of the value of this "authority," in sustaining the dignity of the priesthood as our only legitimate ecclesiastical rulers; but I cannot subscribe to their authority, even when thus derived, unless it is also intended to express a divine, holy power, given by the Holy Spirit itself. If it is an authority simply of human origin, it is entitled to no respect whatever, except so far as it has legislative confirmation. Could St. Paul himself re-appear among us,

his precepts would have no *governing* power, unless they were given by inspiration. This constitutes the whole value of the doctrine, even when thus enunciated. If the apostolic "authority" is not divine, it is not obligatory,—and of course, is valueless; if it be divine, it still amounts to a tradition of the Holy Spirit. And then, to avoid the corollary of "infallibility," the inconvenience of which is justly felt, a new position is taken,—The "authority" thus handed down, is only an authority to rule and to ordain, not to "instruct or interpret."

It does seem a monstrous proposition to begin with, that it should be deemed necessary by the Great Head of our Church, to transmit his Holy Spirit for purposes purely ministerial, and yet withhold it for the far more important purpose of expounding and enforcing his faith and commandments!—that He should inspire a minister, and not inspire a teacher! But passing by this obvious remark, I ask, where is the authority, either in Scripture or out of it, for assuming that the apostles themselves were invested with any discretionary power of thus limiting the traditions of the Holy Spirit, which (as is assumed by the hypothesis) they were appointed to convey to others? Yet, if the proposition be carried out, it will lead to a practical absurdity so great, that, in

the absence of very special and distinct authority, we must distrust it. If such a discretion had been given, who is to prescribe the extent of it? It might be urged by one party, that the tradition was restricted to the Church of Rome; by another, that the Church of Geneva came within the privilege; by a third, that the Church of England was the only favoured body;—and, in the absence of Scriptural evidence, or even of the secondary evidence of the Fathers, who is to decide? Not the Church, certainly; for that is a concession of the issue: it is asserting her “infallibility,”—being the very concession which these subtleties are invented to avoid.

Whatever construction may be found by scholastic ingenuity for the Tractarian doctrine, I can arrive at no conclusion that does not equally involve “infallibility,” as a consequence of that doctrine; and this appears to me so inevitable, that, with sincere respect for many among those who hold it, I put it to their consciences and their candour,—whether it is worth while to bolster up the reverence due to our Church by setting up a title to authority, which, at best, is equivocal, and which assuredly, will never be recognized by the million in these liberal times? A dominant priesthood, ruling by divine authority, is an impossible theory in the nineteenth century of the British history; such pre-

tension, even were it supported by far less doubtful evidence, is only calculated to bring down hatred and contempt on those who raise it, in preference to the far nobler claim to influence and respect, founded upon a zealous, consistent, and holy life. But, if the Tractarian theory is honestly entertained, I ask the same inward monitor, whether it does not lead so directly to the Roman Church, that they ought not, as honest men, to continue robed in the vestments of our own?

CHAPTER II.

“ Angor est ægritudo premens.”

CICERO.

THE day after this conversation, Lawrence had relapsed into such a painful state of depression, attended by utter prostration of animal strength, that I began to feel extreme anxiety for my mother's return, and was even hesitating on the propriety of disclosing his condition to his friends; but the kind and sagacious physician, to whom I fully explained his history, reassured me by the suggestion that it might

he very mischievous to his father in his state of critical convalescence, and that he only ascribed the relapse to the inward struggle which was now going on, between an awakened conviction of error, and a proud horror of the humiliation of a second recantation.

“It is not a question of bodily, but mental disease,” said Dr. Bailey, “he will soon rally from this attack; I only fear for his mind; you must be cautious; press him no further; he will resume the subject as soon as he regains strength; that is inevitable, and you must yield to it, but with judgment; answer his questions, but do not let him draw you into controversy.”

I followed this sound advice to the letter, but it was some time before it became necessary to reduce it to practice; my unfortunate friend became delirious, and even frantic, before many hours elapsed, and it appeared too clearly what direction his thoughts

had taken. Twice only did he mention the name of Agnes, and then in horrible association ; he had, for the twentieth time, in very incoherent words and every variety of expression, charged himself with parricide, when he broke out with : “ Yes, I murdered him, and my mother too ;—I know it well, I followed their mangled bodies to the grave ;—but I had a dispensation ;—Agnes told me they were heretics and I ought to kill them. Didn’t you say so, Agnes ? ”

“ Agnes is not here, Lawrence.”

He turned his eyes to me, as if partially understanding me, and then, extending his arm over the counterpane, and clenching his fist with what little strength remained to him, continued :

“ True,—very true ; I forgot,—she too is gone to my murdered father ; when do you think I shall go to them ? I should like to go now,” and he attempted, with more power

than I had supposed he possessed, to spring from the bed. I managed, with great difficulty, to replace him in it, and he then turned furiously on me, gnashing his teeth with rage, and exclaiming, as loudly as his feeble voice and exhausted strength would permit, "Away! devil—away! *you* are the incarnate fiend that tempted me! where is your dispensation? *you* murdered your daughter—don't ask me for her—begone!" And before I was aware of his purpose, he caught me by the throat, and would have strangled me ere I could have restrained him, had not his screaming tone brought my servant into the room, when with his help, I released myself.

His bewildered fancy then wandered in a new direction; he had become tranquil, and muttered over the succession of the Bishops of Rome in a half articulate voice, interpolating my name and Harrison's among them, "Linus, Harrison, Clement—no, begin again—Linus,

Stanley, Clement, Harrison—yes, that's the order of tradition ;" but the idea did not remain with him, and he quickly returned to his favourite topic, his supposed murder of his parents, of which he no longer spoke in a metaphorical sense, but as a sanguinary act perpetrated by his own hand. I forbear the repetition of these ravings ; nor had I mentioned them at all, except to show the action of his poignant self-reproach, in inducing his temporary derangement. For three days and nights he never slept at all, but on the fourth day after the relapse, he had for the first time sunk into a repose which promised restoration.

It was now more than ten days since my mother had gone to Dover. I had heard from her very briefly, to the effect that Mrs. Harrison was no better, and this was the fifth post that had arrived without a word. I and my sisters were vainly perplexing ourselves to account for her silence, when a loud knock

at the hall door startled us in our speculative reverie, and presently the servant entered and announced—Captain Franklin !

“ All right, my boy—I’ve tracked the vermin to kennel.”

“ What, to Glen Cottage ?”

“ Even so—the fair Cecilia and all.”

“ All ! Do you mean Farquhar ?”

“ Exactly.”

“ Not through Dover, surely ?”

“ Yes, through Dover ; four horses from the ‘ Ship,’ directly they landed. I was after them by the next packet, and followed at their heels till within a stage of the Glen—returned by mail, and called to tell you as soon as I had ordered dinner.”

“ Good gracious ! and his wife now dying at Dover !”

“ What can be done ?” We both ejaculated at once, and I explained to Franklin my very perplexing position. He was not less

confounded than myself, but after a minute's thought said,

"I think, Stanley, you are always in a mess; but neither this nor the last was a mess of your own cooking: let your man go to my club and countermand my dinner. I'll take my chance with you—you must dine soon though—and we will talk over it."

I was only too glad to avail myself of his company and counsel; we dined, drew our chairs and wine round the fire, as people will do, whether in ease or perplexity, joy or sorrow, and my sisters having "made themselves scarce," we proceeded to business.

"Well," I began, "what do *you* propose?"

"Let us see,—first there is the post; then a special messenger."

"The post won't do; letters are not delivered at Glen Cottage till a day after they reach the post-town. Post-office economy from time immemorial."

“Then *you* must go. Can’t send a man in such a case as this.”

“If *I* go, we have a scene, to a certainty; not that I care for that, but it might damage me with Cecilia. It is unpleasant to be turned out of the house before the eyes of one’s mistress, and a rival to boot.”

“Something in that. I shouldn’t like it myself; though,” (and he stretched out his Herculean limbs) “I doubt if ’twould be very easy: by Jove, Stanley, why shouldn’t I go myself? you’ll give me credentials?”

“You! why, you have travelled two nights already.”

“And what then? I can travel twenty in a good cause, and with far less trouble than that attending the nursing of a madman, which seems your duty here.”

And so it was arranged. I ordered tea immediately, sent to book his place, and seated myself at the table to write to Mr. Harrison.

It was not yet six o'clock, and Lawrence continued dozing and tranquil; Captain Franklin occasionally expressing his astonishment that Apostolic succession should ever derange the human intellect. "I never troubled my head about any succession in my life, except to my uncle's estate; I had some trouble about that, but then that's a different matter, and enough to puzzle a Solon: once or twice I have succeeded to a command, and that's bother enough, too, in its way; but as to the Apostles, they were all good men, and what can their rank matter now-a-days!"

A soldier's ideas of divinity are always peculiar, and perhaps were never more so than at the close of the continental war. It was not worth while, even if there had been time, to enlighten the Captain, for he was a good, honest fellow, with a light heart and a generous temper, and I never knew either the one or the other much improved by religious controversy.

Just at that moment, too, when my, eldest sister came in to discharge that most amiable of feminine duties, making tea for a man setting out by night on a hundred and fifty miles' journey, Franklin seemed to be unaccountably averse to everything but tea, and exhausted more cups in half-an-hour, than a washerwoman could do in two. To do my sister justice, she was a handsome girl of eighteen, and, if a few summers have since passed over, they have only more strongly marked upon her features the same cheerfulness and intelligence which then were too much mingled with maiden timidity to develop themselves with freedom.

At half-past eight, and not a minute before, Franklin left us to take his place inside the mail, carrying my letter, which consisted but of five lines, written in the third person, to the effect that, having accidentally heard of Mr. Harrison's recent arrival at Glen Cottage, I had felt it my duty to avail myself of the kind

services of my friend, Captain Franklin, to apprize him instantly of his wife's dangerous illness at Dover.

I resumed my place at Lawrence's bed-side, but not with the same composure that I had hitherto maintained. Cecilia was at length traced, and I had still to perform the difficult task, now ten times more difficult than ever, of making my approaches to her, if not in due form, at all events in such a form as might leave me unfettered by conditions to which I never could subscribe, and with which even my compliance seemed far from ensuring my success. Her mother's dangerous state deprived me of all hope of her friendly interposition, on which I had secretly placed much reliance; should she die, then what would her father, now, as I was well satisfied, my personal enemy, care for me, except to thwart every attempt to reach his daughter? Then too, Farquhar maintained his position, and notwithstanding Law-

rence's assurance that she despised him, I well knew how large are the advantages secured to the most despicable lover, by propinquity of position. Had I not been so unfortunately situated, with the care not only of Lawrence but of my two sisters, whom I could not with propriety leave without my protection, and also daily expecting my mother's return from Dover, I should have set all risk of scening at defiance, and have gone myself to Glen Cottage; but these circumstances compelled me to a course which prudence clearly dictated, however ungrateful to inclination. It was an infinite relief to me that Lawrence remained tranquil and gave me no further trouble: but, though tranquil, his consciousness did not return. There were no more ravings—no more delirious wanderings; all subsided into a calm unconsciousness in which the body evidently found relief; the only ground of apprehension was the state in which the mind might awake with returning physical powers.

On the morning following Franklin's departure for the Glen, came the letter from my mother which for five days I had been anxiously expecting. It was, indeed, short and sad : " She is gone, and all is over ! She was buried to-day ;—we shall be with you in a few hours."

" We" could only mean Agnes and herself, and here was new difficulty, but it did not harass me long : on the contrary, I rather anticipated from it some advantage in the way of effecting one of my cherished purposes, a reconciliation between her and Lawrence. Her precipitate rejection of him, after long and half-acknowledged engagement, had been as ill-advised a step as his own thoughtless apostasy ; more considerate reflection must have told her that she had thrown away the influence that might have reclaimed him. It was also likely that, wounded as her heart must be already by the loss of her mother, it would be yet more softened by Lawrence's state, and she would

then be well prepared for the reconciliation so much desired ; yet, on the other hand, I was not without misgivings, that the *reintegratio amoris* might tend to widen the breach between him and his father. His Roman faith had been expressly mentioned by Lawrence as one of the subjects of quarrel that had led to such alarming illness. How anxiously I desired that my father might speedily return, at this critical and perplexing conjuncture of affairs !

But I had not much time to worry myself with speculative difficulties. They left Dover at an early hour, and before four o'clock, the carriage was at the door, and once more I had the satisfaction of finding myself in my mother's arms. I saluted Agnes with all the affection of a brother ; her arch spirits were not gone, though her face as well as her dress spoke of sorrow.

"I am *not* Cecilia, Henry," and she smiled while she thus checked my warmth of feeling ;

“nay, do not be distressed; for your sake I almost wish I were.—Oh, not for my own! don’t flatter yourself,” she added, as I responded to the wish with something more of self-complacency in my looks perhaps, than was quite to her taste.

I observed a sort of fluttering anxiety in my mother’s face, and instantly was at her side to catch her whisper,—“She knows nothing of Lawrence being here; I could not tell her.” I disengaged myself in a moment, under colour of giving directions about the luggage, and imposed silence on the servants and my sisters.

Few things of the kind are more painful than to combine the cheerful excitement of reunion, and the sober feelings of sincere condolence with domestic affliction: to rejoice at meeting the individual, while you grieve at the loss he has sustained. Both joy and sorrow are essentially selfish, but where they meet together the former has generally the ascendancy; and so

it was this evening. It may be a severe satire on human nature, but it is too true to be denied, that, when, the first shock of bereavement is over, when the first burst of woe and lamentation is exhausted — the heart has a wonderful power of adapting itself to circumstances, and looking round, if not with calmness, at least with consideration, upon its new position.

Agnes was a warm-hearted, generous, affectionate girl as ever lived, endowed with strong passion, though not cursed with strong temper : whatever some ladies may think of it, there is a broad line of demarcation between the two ; good temper, amiable temper, sweet temper, may perfectly consist with warmth of disposition, and enthusiasm of passion of even tragic temperature. I have known women possessed of the fortitude of martyrs and the energy of heroes, and of warmer passions than Miss Baillie or even Shakespeare ever ventured to delineate,

who 'yet could understand, and consistently practise, the cheerfully submissive meekness which is the highest ornament of female domestic life. Agnes felt, and deeply felt, the loss of her mother, and she had more than ordinary cause for feeling it. Most sincerely, too, did I sympathize with her, for I had, as I have already explained, but too much reason to apprehend the results as they affected myself; nor had I forgotten her prediction, never now to be realized,—that we should soon meet again. Yet this evening passed away, not in merriment certainly, but still, not in sadness. We had much to communicate; I especially, and it was a late hour before we had satisfied mutual curiosity.

“So Cecilia actually gave you back the portrait? It is doubly valuable now, Henry. Cecilia would redeem it with herself, if she has my feelings.”

“Really Agnes, I know not if she has any

feelings ! Though the court resounded with our united names, she restored it to me with the cool tranquillity of an automaton, acting by merely mechanical impulse."

"Well, you *are* unreasonable: would you have had her throw herself into your arms?"

"They would have been open to receive her at all events; but something less would have contented me: anything but cool indifference."

"Henry, I do not understand the matter, but that there is some mistake at the bottom of it, I am convinced. You know that I have not seen Cecilia since; I have not even heard from her; but I know enough of her to be assured that more than a sense of justice induced her to return it to your hands."

I did not dare to offer a second fraternal salute, but I was delighted with her. On her retiring to her room, I found an opportunity of discussing with my mother our course, as well respecting Lawrence as Mr. Harrison; but to

my chagrin, I found that my mother herself had now become the *confidante* of a secret, that precluded her from entering on the latter question. "I have learned things, Henry, in a death-bed trust, that I cannot now disclose; they will materially affect Mr. Harrison's conduct, and, till I see him and know his intentions, it is my duty to be silent; but I agree with you, Agnes must learn that Lawrence is our inmate here."

My mother undertook the task of informing her; it was more than I felt equal to; nor did I ever learn how it was performed, or how it was received. Agnes re-appeared the next morning with perfect composure, though with unusual gravity, and I could not avoid suspecting that, *malgré* the natural, and indeed, inevitable coincidence of circumstances, she fancied that a plot had been contrived to bring them together. I could not introduce the subject, and I was not impatient, as I was sure

that she would lead to it in some way or other : “ coming to the point ” seemed an hereditary gift where such matters were to be sifted. Almost her first question after the breakfast-table had been cleared, was “ Henry, when did you first consult Dr. Bailey ? ”

“ On the day your servant arrived with your letter ; ” and she hesitated a little, as if comparing dates.

“ Did you see the letter ? ”

“ No.”

“ Did Dr. Bailey communicate its contents ? ”

“ No.”

“ Did not he tell you that I thought my poor mamma was in great danger ? ”

“ No ; he rather, if anything, gave me to understand the contrary.”

“ Did you know that I was with her ? ”

“ I did ; your servant informed me ; I fell in with him accidentally as I was watching the passengers alight.”

“Did Edward—I mean Mr. Lawrence,—was he aware that I was at Dover?”

“No ; he only knew from the post-mark of your letter to himself, that you were there when you wrote it.”

“Then you have heard of that letter ? perhaps seen it ?” and her cheerful, smiling face at once assumed an expression of kindling resolve which I had never previously seen upon it.

“I have seen it.”

“You may tell your friend, then, that my determination remains unaltered and unalterable.”

And she was about to leave the room, but my mother coming in at the same moment, I had time to reply : “You must deliver such a message yourself, Agnes, if you are rash enough to incur the responsibility of it. I am not.”

She returned upon her steps. “The respon-

sibility must rest on you who brought him here; he shall not remain under the more dangerous mistake of supposing that I came here to meet him."

"Agnes, you are yourself labouring under a greater mistake; he is utterly unconscious of everything; he would not know you if he saw you."

It was enough: my mother had not told her this, and scarcely understood it herself; for, when she went to Dover Lawrence was in a far better state, ill as he was, than now, and she had not seen him since her return. I had, though not intentionally, gone too far. Agnes gave an hysterical shriek and fainted; we soon restored her, and then the revulsion of her feelings led to the opposite extreme.

"Yes; I *will* see him—I will see him instantly; my voice will restore him better than medicine; let me go to him—let me go."

But I apprehended that the shock would be

too great for her at present, and would not suffer it, telling her that I had more to communicate to her, before she could see Edward with justice either to herself or him. She was more soothed, however, by the soft attentions of my mother and sisters, than by anything I could say, and indeed, she scarcely seemed to comprehend me fully; so I left her to their care, and watched for an hour at Lawrence's bedside. He was awake and calm, but continued still unconscious. I should have felt extreme anxiety from the long duration of this *quasi* mesmerized condition, but that Dr. Bailey had prepared me to expect it. He did not know me, nor appear to be sensible of my presence; so that, as regarded himself, I was satisfied that Agnes might approach without disturbing him, and I returned to the drawing-room to tell her so.

“Then let me see him at once.” And we no longer opposed her wishes: stipulating only that

she should not speak to him, nor give way to any emotion. It was in vain to expect implicit obedience to such injunctions, nor was it rendered. She bent over him for a minute, as if to satisfy herself both of his identity and his insensibility, and then kissed him twice, leaving her tears upon his cheek.

Few things are more dangerous in a sick room than the weak facility of kindness. It is well expressed by the Eastern proverb, "The physician is emperor in the sick man's chamber." I had transgressed the prohibition of Dr. Bailey, in exposing Lawrence to excitement, and I had even forgotten my own principle of withholding every stimulus ; for what drug does pharmacy contain of such stimulating power as the countenance of a much-beloved and long-lost friend,—and that friend, the mistress of one's affections? For a moment, he looked at her with uncertainty, as if doubtful whether it was a real or a fancied vision.

Agnes• shrunk back—a little abashed, perhaps, at the extent to which she had indulged her emotion ; so that when he extended his arms, as if to satisfy himself of her reality, she was beyond his reach, and they closed on vacancy. His insensibility was gone ; but his delusion remained, and took, if possible, a yet more distressing form. His eyes wandered over the room, in vain search for the object that had awakened him from his lethargy. Agnes had retreated behind the curtains of the bed, beginning to feel that this experiment on his consciousness was a dangerous one. My mother and myself remained by his side, but he did not perceive us ; and in our anxiety that the agitation should not be carried farther, we forbore from speaking, or otherwise drawing his attention towards us. We would have withdrawn Agnes from the room, but it was not possible, without bringing her once more before his eyes. Again and again he looked around him, as if to

assure himself that she was no longer present, and stretched out his hands in all directions, grasping at the air. It was obvious that, for the moment, reason had attempted to resume her power, but was still too feeble to command it; recognition had recurred, but like the flame of a taper partially re-lighted, was extinguished by the same breath that had recalled it into existence. After these vain attempts to comprehend her sudden and transient appearance, he began in a low, subdued voice, gradually rising into vehemence, as the self-irritation increased,

“It was an angel came to mock me; Heaven is closed to parricides. ’Tis useless, Agnes;—there’s a great gulf fixed between us; how did you pass it? And so it must be,—for ever. I shall see you, but not reach you. Where is my father? let me see *him*, Agnes. Let him say ‘pardon,’ and I will bless you, even here.—But you are blest already; and I am lost, lost,

for ever lost." His agitation became excessive, and the bed shook under the violence with which he struck himself with his clenched hands, and trembled with his muscular contortions. He had worked himself into frenzy.

I interposed, and tried to soothe him; but my efforts were worse than useless. He was dreadfully excited; he grasped me with both arms, and held me forcibly, reverting to his original delusion with slight variation. "Fiend, *you* are not my father!—I did not ask for *you*!—*you* are always near!—*you* were the arch-fiend who first seduced me!—*you* made me apostate to my faith, and a murderer of the best of fathers! Yet, (and he subsided into a low moaning) *you* are as miserable as myself; your Agnes is in Heaven with my father, and where are *we*?" and, releasing me as suddenly as he had caught me, he fell back on the bed, groaning as in an agony of despair. My mother had, up to this moment, retained Agnes by actual

strength ; and though she struggled with some vehemence to disengage herself, the poor delirious patient was so occupied with his own sad visions, that he was quite unconscious of their presence. But she would be withheld no longer ; she rushed forward, and threw herself on the bed beside him, to soothe him with her weeping caresses.

“Edward, dear Edward, I am here ! You called me, and I came. Will you not answer me ? One word, — only one word ! Say you know me, and I will not leave you !” But it was all in vain ; the charm was broken, and, exhausted by the violence of his raving efforts, he had again relapsed into utter unconsciousness. He once opened his eyes ; but it was with an expression of stupified terror, bordering on the look of idiocy.

It was many hours before Agnes recovered from the shock of this dreadful scene. We carried her to her room, almost as bewildered

and as insensible as her unhappy lover. For some time we had too much reason to apprehend that she would have given way under these accumulated shocks, still recent as was the wound caused by her mother's death; nor was it the least part of her suffering, that she reproached herself with the indiscretion of thus reviving Lawrence to the remorseful agony of his conscience. With the inconsistency natural to the position in which she found herself, and with a self-persuasion of her influence, no less natural to all who love and feel that love is returned, she would have insisted on another interview with Lawrence; but neither my mother nor I would yield to her wish. We immediately sent for Dr. Bailey, for his judicious advice was required for both our patients. With some rebuke for our indiscretion, he administered sedatives that speedily restored Agnes to tranquil self-possession, for her strength of mind was great, and eventually came to her relief:

when it did, the effect of this interview, "painful as it had been, appeared both beneficial and decisive. Her resolution remained unchanged; at least she said so; but she added, that as her unkindness had brought him to this state, (an error in which, at the expense of a little truth, I did my best to confirm her) it was her duty to exert herself for his restoration. I suspected that I had gained one of the points on which my heart was set, and I left the rest for the present, to Dr. Bailey and the chapter of accidents.

CHAPTER III.

“ Expectata seges vanis elusit aristis.”

VIRG. GEOR.

No words can convey the joyful satisfaction with which, on the day after my mother's return, we greeted the arrival of my father from his long-protracted mission. “A Dartford chaise and four,” screamed my sisters, as they rushed from the window to the hall. “Express from Dover,” shouted John, as he scrambled up the kitchen stairs, to anticipate the knock. “Papa, Papa,” “Mr. Stanley,” and

“ the Governor,” were exclaimed, echoed, and re-echoed in every tone of the gamut ; and pleasure, unmingled and indescribable, filled every breast, as he was deliberately torn to pieces in the caresses of domestic salutation. The tumult and clamour of his arrival even elicited the first transient symptom of returning consciousness in Lawrence, who pettishly asked his nurse what the noise was about ? but relapsed into unconsciousness before he could be made to comprehend the cause.

Of all the party, I had perhaps the greatest reason to congratulate myself on his opportune arrival. Captain Franklin would return on the following day, or the next at the furthest, and was not unlikely to bring Mr. Harrison, as well as Cecilia. Their first call would naturally be on us ; and to meet them under such circumstances, demanded more tact and discretion than I was conscious of possessing. I now had my best adviser and truest ally at my side, and

probably possessing information that could guide us through the labyrinth. We speedily reported to each other our manifold adventures ; and it struck me as singular, that my father listened to my narrative with a gravity of manner that seemed to attach to it more importance than I myself gave to it, now that it was all passed and gone. Agnes, after her first introduction, had considerably retired.

“Am I to understand, my boy, that you have never seen Harrison or Cecilia since your trial?”

“Never ; nor till Franklin informed me, the day before yesterday, had I any conception where they were. I think they must call here to-morrow.”

“They will never think of it. My interview with the Home Secretary this afternoon will appear in the ‘Court News,’ and Harrison will not come near *me*.”

“And why not, my dear father ? He denies

all share in my prosecution; and if it were only to sustain the shew of innocence, he must call."

"He will not come near us."

"I have a reason for thinking so too," interposed my mother; "but our dear Harry will excuse me for not mentioning it just now;" and upon this hint I took my sisters out of the room, and prevailed on Agnes to walk out with us.

It certainly was very strange that, in our wise speculations as to the course we ought to take in the emergency, both Franklin and myself had entirely overlooked the probability, that the same mail which brought to town my mother's letter announcing Mrs. Harrison's death, would bring up one of the servants, on his way to Glen Cottage, to communicate the information to the servants in charge of the place. In fact, the groom had, undirected, gone on this errand the very day after her death; while my mother had not written to me till the day of her funeral,

which had been necessarily accelerated. Hence, as it afterwards appeared, Mr. Harrison was apprized of every thing the moment he reached home; and, attended only by Farquhar, had proceeded to Dover without waiting an hour in London. He arrived there the day after my mother had quitted it;—my mother, in the constant bustle that had occurred ever since she rejoined us, had forgotten to mention the servant's departure. Franklin's arrival, at a late hour on the evening of my father's return, caused us to be informed of all this; nor was it without intense mortification that I at once perceived the correctness of his half-whisper,

“So you see, my fine fellow, had you gone yourself, you would have had it all your own way, and won in a canter!”

“It is not too late still; I'll be off to-morrow.”

“It's no go at present; I will tell you more when we are alone.”

“Tell me now; we have no secrets here.”

“You forget her sister. I will tell you all if you will call on me to-morrow. Trust a eninsular man for reconnoitring an enemy’s works.”

I was doomed to suspense that evening. My father also took me aside :

“It’s a long story, Hal; you must wait my leisure a little. But what your mother tells me, confirms my suspicions: we shall see nothing more of this sly fox; as to Cecilia, we must look after her.”

“Had I not better go there at once? I can start to-morrow.”

“Yes, and spoil the whole! No, no; longer heads than yours must play your cards for you.”

“I don’t know; but I have a shrewd suspicion that I can make love best for myself.”

“Oh, no doubt of your ability that way! You may go to the Glen to-night, if you like;

but if you do, you will not see Cecilia,—simply, because she will not see you. Go and cheer Agnes; she seems as woe-begone as yourself.”

And I had no alternative; for my father immediately went to the House, my mother was attending Lawrence, and Franklin seemed as lively with my sister as if he had just left his bed, instead of travelling in my service for four nights consecutively. I approached Agnes, and unfolded all my vexation to her. She asked me for her mother’s portrait, and I took it from the breast-pocket of my waistcoat. She looked at it for a minute, and kissed it, while a tear fell from her eyes.

“I wish I could remember my dear mother when this was taken!”

I would not interrupt the gush of filial tenderness, but waited till she had, by a strong effort, recovered herself. In another minute she touched the spring that disclosed the crucifix; and, after reverently crossing herself,

removed it from the case, and, to my amazement, drew out a very minute slip of paper, which she put into my hands, while her tear was absorbed in her arch smile. I snatched it out of her hand, read the few words almost imperceptibly written upon it, and striking my forehead, exclaimed, "Wretched fool that I am ! not to have dreamed of this !" It was but one line. "Is this *your* symbol too ? Hotel Royal till to-morrow."

"And how came you to know of this, Agnes ?"

"I only knew it a week ago,—or little more ; but I cannot tell you how or when." And her beautiful countenance again assumed the look of sorrow that will not be repressed, which made me conclude that the communication was derived from her mother. I forbore to urge her. "Up to that day then, at least, I was beloved." And with this somewhat equivocal assumption, I endeavoured to console myself.

Nor was Franklin's explanation the next morning much more satisfactory. I was with him at his club by breakfast.

"So you found Cecilia all alone?"

"You have a good taste, Stanley; on honour, she is a fine creature."

"Yes, yes,—I know all that; but what passed?"

"Little enough. 'My father's gone to Dover—indebted to your kind activity—some refreshment?—good morning.'"

"And you learnt nothing?"

"I won't say that. A soldier never refuses food when he can get it, and I am an old campaigner: so I accepted her offer, though she would not stay to do the honours. A very pretty spread followed, for a little mid-day recreation; and, as I had nobody else to speak to, and can't feed in silence, I tackled John."

"And what did you get out of him?"

"That they have struck their tent, and are in

full retreat ; your pretty Cecilia being left in the rear, to cover the baggage."

"Did you observe any signs of a breaking-up?"

"None ; unless a trunk or two in the hall, packed and corded."

"What was Cecilia about?"

"Nothing, when I entered ; but now you remind me, I do recollect that papers were scattered on the table, and there was an open desk."

"My mind is made up : I'll go there to-night. I may yet be in time to see her ; to-morrow may be too late."

"Well, at all events it will not be such cold hunting as you had at Paris ; but make up your mind for a blank day, for I fear it."

I was resolved, however, and secured my place without delay. Nor would I expose myself to the risk of parental remonstrance, by avowing my purpose ; for I well knew that, though my

father would never prohibit me, he would deem his own judgment better than mine, if only because he was *not* in love. I therefore merely returned to Dover Street to pack up a carpet-bag, and leave a letter for him, in which I shortly explained my purpose, and the information which led to it. I dined at home, and quietly stole away in time for the mail. The next afternoon found me at the neighbouring market-town, about six miles distant from the Glen ; and, to avoid observation as much as possible, I determined to walk to the Cottage.

It was nearly three years since I had been there, but I knew my way perfectly, by the shortest route ; nor was the interval long enough to have witnessed any of those great changes which, in these days, sometimes make us lose ourselves in paths with which infancy was familiar. Yet there was a change, and to me an awful one, visible as soon as I came in sight of the house. It was not yet dusk, yet every

shutter was closed, and no signs of animation appeared.

It is difficult to describe the feelings with which, after some lapse of time, one approaches a house which he has known only as a scene of animated joy and pleasure, to find it darkened, silent, and untenanted. I can scarcely say whether it is more painful to revisit it, and see its walls mouldering in decay, its gardens overrun with weeds, its shrubs and fruits flourishing untrained, in wild luxuriance, and its gravel-walks and carriage-sweeps indicating, by moss and thistle, their now useless, unserviceable barrenness; or when all its elegant, well-ordered arrangement still subsists, and recent culture proves that the taste and intelligence which have long presided, have only just quitted the scene of daily duty. In either case, its desolation or its graceful utility is affecting, by the powerful contrast of its deserted state, with the scene of former recollections.

On first entering the grounds, and perceiving no labourer at work,—no living being, not even a dog,—to hail my intrusion, I felt sad and disconcerted; so much so, that my heart misgave me, and I was on the point of returning abruptly; but it occurred to me that these might be only the signs of mourning, and I proceeded to the grand entrance; nor did it fail to strike my eye, as I approached it, that there were recent traces of horses' feet and carriage wheels visible on the gravel. I rang the bell three times before I received an answer; and when I heard its unintermitted peal,—first clanging loudly through the hall and passages, and then gradually tinkling, by long intervals, into silence, and had twice in vain experimented on its powers,—I began to fear that the place was wholly uninhabited. The third time I was more successful: a pretty child, about twelve years old, showed herself in the passage as I was peering through the side-lights, and,

seeing my face, enquired my name but without opening the door. As soon as I could make it intelligible through the glass window, she disappeared, and was presently followed by a middle-aged woman, who also made her observations through the window before she would allow an entrance. When she had satisfied herself that, though an unexpected intruder, I was not a housebreaker, she unlocked the door.

“You will excuse my caution, Sir, but I am lonely here till my husband comes from work.”

“So it seems; how long have the family been gone?”

“Mr. Harrison went some days ago: Miss Cecilia this morning: she only staid to settle with the servants, and give us charge of the house.”

“Where is she gone?” And I put the question in such an agitated tone, that, without answering me, she said,

“You seem tired, Sir; will you come in and rest yourself?” And as I did so she observed me closely, and added, “and you too are in deep mourning, Sir; are you one of the family?”

“No, my good woman; but I am in mourning for Mrs. Harrison, for I loved her dearly.”

“Then I am sure you love Miss Cecilia,” said the little girl, who had returned to her mother’s side, and who, as I now noticed, wore a rosary round her neck. It immediately recalled my father’s remark on his return from the Glen, and, as I had much to learn, I availed myself of the casual introduction, to show that I was no stranger.

“Indeed I do, my child, and it was Miss Cecilia who gave you that rosary, only six months ago, or less, when you were living at the lodge.”

“It was indeed, Sir;” and, turning to her

mother, she said in a very audible whisper, "Mother, who can this gentleman be?"

"I see, Sir," said the mother, "you are no stranger, though I can't say I recollect you, nor your name either; but they have left plenty in the house to eat and drink, though no service; if you don't mind that, I hope you will sit down and take something."

I gladly accepted her hospitality, though disappointment and consequent vexation had deprived me of appetite, for the offer gave me an opportunity of gleaning information.

While she disappeared to prepare the table as well as her unfurnished state allowed, I wandered through the rooms, whose appearance even three years' absence had in no way obliterated from my memory. Nothing is more uncomfortable to the feelings than straying through the dim daylight of half-closed apartments—the very air seems sad, and oppressive, and desolate: even to rise at an early hour, before the domestics

have performed their morning duties, and to stroll into the still disordered scene of last night's dance or supper — chairs deranged, books out of place, stray glasses,—some on the table, some on the mantel-piece,—ashes in the grate, and curtains still drawn, while daylight insinuates itself in dusty rays through the crevices of the shutters,—disturbs one's equanimity, and unfits one for everything but a loiter in the garden, to watch the progress of the dawn, and cheer the thoughts with the carol of the half-domesticated, but more active thrush or blackbird. This disagreeable tone of feeling is stronger, and even embittered, when excited by the semi-darkness, not of a sleepy, but an uninhabited house; the echo of every step seems to say, "There is nobody here," and the mind responds with the question, "Then why should I be?"

Some sensations of this kind made me hurry forward to a small study, which seemed by its

light to enjoy the full advantage of the day, and which, when I was staying in the house three years before, was known as Mr. Harrison's. It had clearly been the room last in occupation, and retained more traces of animation than any other that I had entered ; I therefore rang the bell, and requested that the tray might be brought there. A few minutes elapsed before it was ready, and in the interim I amused myself by turning over the leaves of a book that had been taken from its shelf.

As I did so, a paper, which had been introduced to mark a passage for future reference, fell out from it. I picked it up, and thoughtlessly unfolded it, not knowing where to replace it. It was a fragment of a letter, written in a female hand. A paper thus left could have no confidential tone about it, and I did not hesitate to read it. It was a mere fragment, and by no means very intelligible ; the

commencement and the greater part of the page were wanting ; but there was more than enough blank paper remaining after the last words to satisfy me, when coupled with their abrupt and imperfect termination, that whatever might have been the writer's intention, the letter had never been finished, and of course, not sent. It ran as follows :

“ may have been the case, it is so no longer ; have no reason for opposing your except that I am sensible that only tranquillity is to reject one who has no self-interest, and to seek in the I shall no longer burthen your conscience nor endanger my ”

And here there was the blank that showed that the letter had never been completed.

Nothing can compete in penetration with the eye of a lover, and particularly a jealous lover ;

yet, with all humility, I confess that I could make nothing of this, unless that, if penned by Cecilia, it was an expostulatory letter to her father, and intended to deprecate an alliance on which he was intent ; but whether with myself or Farquhar, except that I was not only conscious of no selfish motive, but that I was no favourite of Mr. Harrison's, I could not determine. The appearance of the lodge-keeper's wife, with the tray, interrupted my reflections.

“ 'Tis but a poor lunch, Sir, but it may serve your turn till you reach the inn. I'm sorry that I have not the cellar key ; but the best house is a poor place when everybody's gone.”

“ They will not be gone long, I suppose ?”

“ That's as may be, Sir, for they went in a hurry ; but Miss Cecilia was so sad when she kissed my child, that it looked like long leave-taking.”

“ Is she gone to London ?”

“ P'raps she may, p'raps not : she dismissed

everybody yesterday, afore I knew her mind, for I warn't at home when the coachman left word for me to come to the house—but I beg pardon, Sir,—though I'm sure you be no stranger, I don't know exactly who I'm talking to."

"I gave you my card ; my name is Stanley."

"I dare say it be, Sir, but when my master comes home, you can speak to him, if you please to wait."

And no address of mine could extract another particle of intelligence, not even though I gave the little girl a second half-crown to keep with my father's gift ; indeed, I thought that my liberality seemed only to put the woman still more on the defensive. I waited for her husband's return till dusk, but he did not come, and then the good woman gave me a hint that she must shut up the house, which, of course, compelled me, however reluctantly, to take myself off. I sauntered back to the inn, hoping that in a walk of six miles, I might find somebody who

had seen the carriage in the morning; but though I found that it had passed through the turnpike gate about two miles from the cottage, I ascertained that it had not proceeded further on the London road, and there were so many that branched out of it, as to render my inquiries useless, without expending in the pursuit time that might be turned to better account in town.

As it was, I lost another day in returning to the Glen the following morning, for the chance of seeing the husband, but he was "gone to work," the woman did not "exactly know where;" and as on this occasion, she would not even ask me in, I had no alternative but to take the first coach to London. As ill fortune would have it, this did not leave till the following day; and thus I lost, altogether, five days for nothing, save the mysterious fragment.

This was extremely vexatious, for, on my arrival in Dover Street, I found that Agnes also had left us. Lawrence's perfect recovery

of his consciousness, and his daily progress to convalescence, had appeared to work a revolution in her feelings; and, telling my mother that she felt she could no longer remain with propriety under the same roof, she had, without even taking leave of him, gone to the very convent from which, only a few months previously, she had been so anxious to escape. Lawrence was judiciously kept in ignorance of her having been an inmate of the same house.

Women are, at times, unaccountable, inexplicable creatures, it must be owned. I now apprehended, and with too much cause, that there no longer existed a chance of effecting a perfect reconciliation between Lawrence and Agnes. I was deeply disappointed: in the first instance, I had set my heart upon this object, only from good-natured sympathy in his distress, and a desire to restore him to himself as well as to her: a sympathy of greater intensity, because he had been one with whom my intimacy with Cyril had been shared, and

whose destiny promised to be more or less linked with my own. But when I was admitted fully into the intricacies of his position, I could not but perceive that the same obstacles which had occurred to him, were likely to arise in my own case, and that if he should triumph over them, my own success was better secured. Our benevolence is rarely less active and persevering, because its purity is a little sullied by selfish motives.

On my return to Dover Street, I found him in the drawing-room, convalescent, though still feeble. He laughed at the result of my fruitless mission, and my father joined him heartily ; nor, it must be owned, was a journey of three hundred miles, to steal a fragment of an unfinished letter, undeserving of a little ridicule.

“ Benedict volunteered a trifle to avoid his mistress : there was some sense in that, Harry. A mission to Asia for a tooth-pick, would have no terrors for many an honest man that fears a woman’s tongue ; but a scamper to Wales

for a scrap of waste paper ! Could you find no chandler's shop on your way ?”

And many were the gibes and jests, and precious relics of torn-up letters slyly inserted in my books, that I had to sustain at the hands of my family circle, of which Franklin now seemed to be almost an acknowledged member.

I must protest against the injustice of judging amorous young gentlemen by any canons of common sense ; they are entitled to break through them with impunity, by every law of nature, as well as by the practice of their fathers from time immemorial ; girls, as well as other fair creatures of maturer age, have the privilege of being unreasonable ; and I should think better of the lover who would do his “ladye's” bidding, and go to Japan for the length of Prester John's foot, than of the prudential who first asked what he was to get by the journey !

My ramble, however, had not been entirely

useless, for I had ascertained, that whatever might be their ultimate destination, future residence at the Glen formed no part of their plan ; nor was it less apparent that some alliance was the subject of discussion between Cecilia and her father, on which their opinions were by no means concurrent. The family seemed enveloped in such a cloud of unaccountable mystery, that even this scanty gleanings of intelligence was not unwelcome. Mystery is the oxygen of existence to a bad man, whether he be knave or fool ; he cannot live without it, and, unfortunately for others, to whom the vapour is as noxious as it is grateful to himself, he seems gifted with the faculty of diffusing it at pleasure. Never were there two more open-hearted girls than Cecilia and Agnes, but—their father was a Jesuit !

CHAPTER IV.

“A man that is of judgment and understanding, shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself, that those who so differ mean one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree.”

BACON'S ESSAYS.

FOR reasons best known to themselves, neither my father nor my mother seemed inclined, for the present, to enter on the subject of Cecilia, nor could I devise any plan of proceeding, till we obtained some clue to the movements of her father; for I naturally assumed that as she had only remained after him for a few days to break up their household, she would rejoin him now that duty was

discharged. It was not probable that Agnes would long be left in ignorance of their intentions, and I consoled myself with the inward assurance that she would immediately communicate them to my mother or myself. I had still another and a very important end in view—to induce Mr. Lawrence to receive back his son—and I determined to relieve my own anxiety by exerting all my energies to effect it, if possible.

Some time had elapsed since I had been at Highgate; indeed, though my letters to his mother had been frequent, they were no more than bulletins, and written, like other important documents of the same description, only to conceal as much of his illness as consisted with an admission of the fact; for I by no means desired the company of the good lady at home. Her son being now as well as usual, and far better than when I first found him at his lodgings, I paid a second visit to Highgate.

I had not communicated any cause for anxiety respecting him, and therefore I had none to remove. His parents inquired about Edward's health a little more particularly than they might have done under other circumstances, and this was all. I augured well from his father joining in these inquiries ; and having purposely so timed my visit as to secure being asked to remain to dinner, I gladly accepted the invitation, expecting it would give me an opportunity of sounding the old gentleman's present disposition.

Nothing is more constrained than dinner society in which there is no subject of common interest beyond the wines and the *cuisine*. Our conversation flagged dreadfully, and not the less so because I was internally puzzled how to introduce the topic nearest my heart. I tried Paris, but old Lawrence had never been there, "and never wished to go where a bottle of good port or a sirloin of good beef couldn't

be had for love or money." I turned to his recovered appetite, and congratulated him upon it: "Never lost it, as it was; and should never have been grudged it, but for that young reprobate." I retreated back on Paris, and even ventured an allusion to trade; but nothing would go down except his dinner, and I trusted *to the chance of its restoring his frank cordiality of temper.*

"You are allowed what you like, now, I hope?"

"Pretty nearly, Stanley, pretty nearly; and so I need be, if they don't wish to kill me by their 'dietary,' as they call it. People may well die on such short allowance."

"What does your doctor call 'short allowance?'"

"Pure starvation, I believe; for even my wife there was disposed to be 'short' enough, and yet the doctor scolded her."

"I am curious in such statistics of the sick nursery; what had you for breakfast?"

“About enough for a mouse after a good supper: two rolls and two or three eggs, without an atom of ham, tongue, or anything substantial.”

“Then you dined early?”

“And well I might, when they gave me nothing for luncheon but the ham or tongue that I should have had by rights at breakfast; I dined at four, and too glad I have been to hear the hour strike!”

“And then you made up for all?”

“Why—no; I can’t exactly say that; they kept to their text all day: they let me have fish—I never in my life could dine without fish—but they tabooed the soup; not a drop of soup, and I can’t abide broth; and after fish, I was allowed a few ounces of solid beef or mutton, barely enough to fill a plate; chicken I might take in every form—I’ll trouble you, by the way, for that other wing—so I made up with chicken for the scarcity of beef; I helped

out, too, with a little jelly or some trifles of that sort. On the whole, I will do the doctor justice, I managed pretty well at dinner generally; but there was no stint on the chicken or fish. They were deuced stingy of their wine though—another glass?—only three at dinner, and a short pint after; and this for a regular two-bottle man! 'Twas very hard."

"Well, this might serve pretty well for one day."

"Well, I don't know; for supper has always been my favourite meal. If they hadn't tied me up so at breakfast, I might have done; but at first they let me have nothing but gruel or arrowroot—food to poison pigs! I could never have stood this long, so, merely to keep body and soul together, I sometimes stole a march upon them, and pocketed a scalloped oyster or a devilled bone, and I slept so well and throve so well upon it, that I believe I have got rid of the doctor a month sooner

than he expected ; but he swore to the last that I was incurable ! I think I know best ; I never was better in my life : so we'll drink his health, Stanley, in a bumper ! * ”

He had already exceeded the bottle which he claimed as his just allowance, but he was getting precisely into the good-humoured tone I wanted, and, regardless of his wife's frowns and winks, I did not refuse the challenge.

Mrs. Lawrence, finding winks and frowns equally impotent to keep her husband within moderation, soon withdrew, and the opportunity which I had been anxiously attending, seemed arrived ; but I availed myself of it too abruptly.

“ Of all to whom you are justly dear, Sir, none will rejoice at your perfect restoration more than Edward.”

* This dietary of a convalescent was actually pencilled down, *ipsissimis verbis*, from the confession of a civic gourmand, who had fed himself into his doctor's hands.

“The young renegade! never wish to hear his name again!”

“Indeed, Sir, you don’t know his heart or his feelings.”

“Nor he mine, I believe; nor you either, Mr. Stanley, or you would hardly choose the subject.”

Now this prefix of “Mr.” a little staggered me, for, almost from the first minute of our acquaintance, Mr. Lawrence, with a familiarity that is always pleasant to the college ear from the mouth of those who are greatly our seniors, had addressed me as “Stanley;” but I was not disposed to be easily shaken off, so, scarcely adverting to his reply, I proceeded,

“If you knew them as well as I do, Sir, I believe it would be the most delightful topic that I could have started.”

He was not accustomed to opposition it seemed, for, raising himself erect in his chair, and regarding me with that sort of mingled

surprise ~~and~~ vexation with which I have seen a dog rise from his point on kicking out a hedgehog before his nose, he retorted,

“ You are cool, young gentleman, upon my word,—d—d cool as ever I saw! but, hark ye, Stanley; I have no doubt you mean well, for I have always heard good of you; but for your friend, whom, for my misfortune, I must father, he may go to the Pope, or the devil, which he will,—and I believe they are both the same; and you, too, may go with him for aught I care, if you have nothing better to amuse me with.”

And thereupon he leisurely filled his glass, in a way that implied as plainly as words, “ what have ye to say to that?” I had tact enough to say nothing, but filled my own glass at the same time, and left him to go on, or sit silent, as he pleased, for I could perceive that he had already possessed himself of more wine than quite consisted with silence, and every

word that he uttered in this state ~~was~~ a sure index of what was passing in his mind.

“Glad to see you don’t flinch the glass, Stanley; your milk-and-water men are little better than your Papists; they don’t know the right thing when they’ve got it; that that beggarly son of mine should ever have gone to college to learn Papistry! I had rather he had broken his neck at once in that tandem job; he’d have escaped purgatory any how.”

“Your son is *not* a Papist;” and I laid a strong emphasis on the negation. The old man jumped up suddenly from his chair, struck the table violently with his clenched fist, till the glasses rang again, stared at me as if I had given him the lie to his face, and then restraining himself by resolute effort, slowly reseated himself, and said,

“Ay, ay, I understand; I see through the whole matter. No; he is no Papist when it suits him—he is no Papist when his friend is

to wheedle ~~his~~ old father into a match with a Papist; that's the story with them all; they are Papists when they please, and good Church of England men when they please, and priest and Pope can afford to pay for all their lies."

And then, musing a little, while attempting to recover the power of reflection which honest anger and good wine had combined to overthrow, he turned to me abruptly—

"But perhaps you are a Papist, too, Sir?"

"God forbid!"

"Well, Stanley, shake hands; I had rather believe those simple words than if you had sworn you were not; but old men are apt to be suspicious, and I have had enough to make me so. We will talk no more of Edward; when he stands upon my grave, perhaps he will recant again. God grant it may be sincerely!"

"We will talk no more of it, Sir; but permit me to conclude with this, and I pledge my honour as a gentleman for the truth; he has been on the verge of the grave himself,

and remorse for the pain he has occasioned you brought him there."

He was, for the moment, affected; he grasped my hand warmly, and then proposed another glass. It was impossible to refuse the token of reconciliation, but I only accepted it on condition that it should be the last; and we joined Mrs. Lawrence in the drawing-room. His son's name was not again mentioned, and, for the remainder of the evening, he was not only composed but cheerful. The entrance of two or three of those most acceptable of all visitors, friends sufficiently intimate to come in spontaneously upon a "tea and turn out" speculation, enabled me to order my horse, and retreat without any further "scene."

But I could not remain unconscious of the extreme difficulty of my self-appointed task. Mr. Lawrence was clearly not a man to be easily convinced, or easily induced to overlook a fault, till fully convinced that it had been honestly retrieved; nor, at present, did I feel

in any degree confident that his son could be brought to retrace his steps, or be persuaded of their blind folly. Had he avowed himself Turk or Infidel, there would have been a better chance ; but where conscience has so much to bewilder, and self-delusion is furnished with such plausible argument, it is ten times more difficult to recall a wanderer into the way pointed out by sound common sense, no less than by sound doctrine ; the difficulty is enhanced where the wanderer has been only superficially instructed in the right path, or has learned to confound matters of form with matters of substance.

Yet I was not disheartened, for I felt assured in my own mind, that the son was, at heart, as true a Protestant and as sound a churchman as his father, though neither of them knew exactly what they were disputing about ; and upon this conviction I determined to govern my further proceedings.

CHAPTER V.

“It was a notable observation of a wise father, and no less ingenuously confessed, that those which held and persuaded pressure of consciences, were commonly interested therein themselves for their own ends.”

BACON'S ESSAYS.

I AFFECTED more confidence than I really felt, on my return to Dover Street; and the shew of tenderness at the termination of our conversation justified me in reporting to Lawrence, that his father was far from implacable. But I knew the tendency of every thing like a persecuting temper to induce a spirit of martyrdom,—or, at least, of that obstinacy which many people in these days consider the best

substitute for it, now that stakes and faggots are no longer to be had for the asking,—so I resolved to keep to myself all the paternal, and somewhat coarse diatribes against the peculiarities of the Roman faith.

It was more than he had expected, and Lawrence was satisfied that a step was gained. As he was perfectly re-instated in health, both of body and mind, and not at all disposed to make any secret of his change of creed, I took the opportunity, on the following day, when nobody remained after dinner but Franklin and ourselves, to sift his intentions; and it struck me as the best way, to assume, as a matter of course, that no hesitating doubt could yet linger on his conscience.

“Now you are quite recovered, Lawrence, I conclude you will soon make your public profession?”

“Why, as to that, I can’t say that I have thought much about it; not half so much as of

our late conversation. Indeed, I am not quite sure that it is necessary ; and there seems something ostentatious in these public recantations."

"But you are not a free agent ; you must do as your priest desires." And he winced a little under my remark ; not the less so that Franklin, who was somewhat given to sporting phraseology, ratified it in his dry way :

"He is your whipper-in, you know, my good fellow."

"There is no hurry about it, at all events."

"But he'll be in a hurry, you may depend upon it, if he finds you've lost the scent."

"He must be content to let me make a fair cast for myself."

"The devil a bit ; there's nothing these fellows hate so much as a self-hunter : they'll never let you try back."

"You have been much abroad, Franklin ; can you give me any idea of the form of it?"

“Not. I; nobody dreams of changing his religion abroad,—not where I have been, however. They always stick to the faith of their fathers, right or wrong—good, bad, or indifferent; and I don’t think the worse of them for it. But I believe there is something about a white sheet and a tallow candle by way of penance; but whether they eat it, or carry it like other Christians, I really don’t know.”

And the poor Captain, who was muddling in the confusion of ecclesiastical penance with recantation of error, added, by way of comfort, with a serious air, “but I believe you may get off all that by paying a good round sum as smart-money. I never in my life knew either monk or priest refuse a napoleon, or even a dollar, in a quiet way.”

These unceremonious comments grated somewhat harshly on Lawrence’s ear; he affected the martyr at once, with all becoming spirit.

“Purchase exemption! No! I would wear

the sheet, and a halter round my neck to boot, if conscience told me it was my duty, as readily as you would face the enemy.”

“Or be flogged at the cart’s tail, perhaps,” retorted the merciless Captain; “and no doubt you must, if his Reverence bids you, or smart for your recusancy in a snug place that they have found out for themselves, as somewhat preferable to ours, and which they call purgatory. I think I could find them a shorter name for it. But, you see, here is the mischief of it; when *we* are put on desperate duty, we have, at least, the credit of volunteering, and if we have any luck, we may get a step by it,—honour, at all events; but when *your* officer gives the word of command, you get the penance and he carries away the credit of the service. That is not, in my opinion, a fair division of prize-money; you ought at least to have the credit of your conversion among your new friends, when it brings so little with those you leave.”

I began to fear that Franklin's blunt description of the case might give offence that would rivet the chain I wished to break, and I endeavoured to give a grave turn to the subject.

"But, Lawrence, you speak with a reservation; you say, 'if conscience tells you that it is your duty;' of course, 'every Englishman will do his duty.' But put the case, that your priest orders you, and your conscience does not say a word, which I take to be Franklin's drift, what will you do then?"

"It is rather hard to press me so closely, Stanley, when you know that I am still but a novice; your question involves much more than a simple case like that assumed by Franklin."

"No doubt of it," persisted Franklin, "and that is the precise point that puzzles me: how any man that is not a soldier by trade, can be excused a conscience! I thought it had been a privilege peculiar to soldiers and Jews."

“We *are* allowed a conscience, Captain, and, what is more, are compelled to follow its dictates.”

“The devil you are! Then where is the use of vows, and veils, and dispensations, and indulgences, and all that sort of thing? A man who truly follows conscience, has no need of vows to force it, or of dispensations to offend it.”

“Vows are not forbidden by Scripture.”

“No; nor yet enjoined.”

“But, Lawrence, you are shirking the question; your priest tells you one thing, and your conscience another:—which do you obey?”

“I am taught to believe your hypothesis impossible.”

“Then you never were in Spain,” said the Captain.

“Nor, I think, much read in your native history. A cardinal at least should be a safe guide: what say you to Wolsey?”

“ If my spiritual guide misleads me, the sin is his.”

“ Very comfortable doctrine that ! it perhaps may stand you in good stead in purgatory ; but I can tell you, my dear fellow, it would be a hard pillow on a battle-field.”

“ How do you know, Captain, if a soldier is disallowed a conscience ?” and Franklin, in his turn, was a little perplexed.

“ Why as to that, Lawrence, I don’t say that there may not be some private matters, on which a military man must sometimes ask himself awkward questions, as well as another :—the fewer he has to ask the better ; but when he puts on the red coat, he must obey orders, whatever service he is in, and those who put him on wrong service must answer for it ; but soldiers are not always reprobates. I think I remember one or two conscientious officers mentioned in the New Testament, and that their consciences, too, received orders from God, and not from priest or council.”

"I fear, Lawrence, this infallibility, or, if you like it better, this vicarious responsibility of your priest, is an inevitable corollary from your favourite crotchet of Apostolic Succession. But let us pass the wine and join the ladies: you have been catechized enough for one day."

"Ay, ay—those are indulgences for which, thank God, we need not trouble conscience or priest;" and so saying, Franklin emptied his glass with thorough good will, swearing that "if he had only got another step, he would change his red coat for a black one, if it were only to fight the rascals at their own weapons."

"And do you really think this rough logician right?" whispered Lawrence to me, as we slowly followed the Captain's huge strides up three stairs at a time.

"Assuredly I do; and so do you, were you not ashamed to own it."

"If I were ashamed to own the truth, I

should never have suffered so painfully as I have done, and still do."

"Tell me now, have you "confessed" since your rupture with your father?"

"I have."

"Did you confess your quarrel with him?"

"Yes."

"And what said your father confessor when you owned it?"

"That I was precipitate and culpable ; that I should have said nothing about it."

"Or, in other words, have deceived your father. Did he give you absolution?"

"Yes."

"Then how, has it happened that after pardon and absolution by apostolic power, your conscience has so harassed you, as to bring you to death's door, to use your own words, as a cruel parricide?"

"Repentance has its agony, even when forgiven."

"No, Lawrence, it is remorse that causes

agony, and conscience awakens remorse ; it is vain to deceive yourself ; conscience is paramount to the priest, and so will continue to the end of the chapter, whenever it has fair play."

"It is the natural tendency of conscience to deceive and mislead itself ; it requires spiritual guidance."

"True ; but it must be guided by that which cannot err,—the Bible ; not by those who, to avoid inconvenient challenge for their own errors, claim infallibility. It is a curious fact that our Saviour, the fountain of the infallibility which is thus arrogated by man, nowhere condescends to instruct his hearers, without simultaneous appeal to their understanding ; as if it were his purpose to insist on the duty of every man, to bring to the consideration of his spiritual affairs, the same freedom of intelligence and conscience that he exercises, without challenge, in his worldly business.

"You seem to take it for granted, that the

infallibility is claimed as a personal attribute ; but it is the Church, not the priest, by whom alone it is asserted."

"Where is the distinction? a Church is not an abstract idea ; it is composed of individuals, and its decrees are the work of men, not of God. Of the two, I think, and the general experience of mankind proves, that the wisdom of collective bodies * is more frequently at fault than individual judgment ; so entirely

* It is a weakness of human nature, inseparable, perhaps, from its social character, to throw itself upon the collective sagacity of numbers. The knowledge resulting from the aggregate experience of many, must necessarily exceed the practical knowledge of an individual ; but the capability of drawing just and sound inference from accumulated experience, is always in the inverse ratio of the number of logicians engaged in the task. The accumulated knowledge of men is invaluable ; their collective wisdom as worthless as their associated honour. I fear this is as true of "councils," as I know it to be of boards and committees.

is this recognised as a principle, that every statute contains a clause, permitting its amendment or repeal in the same session. My argument remains untouched, wherever you choose to bestow the attribute ; whatever be the true Church, Christ, ex hypothesi, is its Head : and if even its great Head never claimed to be the arbiter of man's faith, apart from inward conviction by reason and conscience, how can such a prerogative be asserted by his ministers, either in their individual or their collective capacity ? Nor did the Apostles themselves exhibit such presumption. When the martyr Stephen addressed the synagogue of the Libertines with irresistible eloquence, it was because he spoke with ' wisdom ' as well as spirit. When St. Paul made Felix tremble on his throne, it was because he ' reasoned ' Even the primitive Fathers, though further removed in date from the pure infancy of the Church, retained in view the example of Christ and his Apostles ;

and, instead of authoritatively prescribing dogmas of faith, addressed their pastoral epistles to the understandings of their flocks. There cannot exist a doctrine more essentially Antinomian, than that which would place the free conscience of a man under the domination of a fellow creature, and thereby shift on any other than his Saviour, the responsibility for his sins."

To what extent I had convinced Lawrence, it was difficult to say, for such discussions cannot be maintained in a drawing-room, and my argument was not finished, when Franklin and my sister had made some progress in a duet, which rendered every other sound inaudible. Lawrence drew near to the piano, as if glad of an excuse for deferring a decision upon the point of public profession. Music has many charms, and it is not among the least, that it affords a convenient apology for breaking off an inconvenient conversation.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue.”

WINTER'S TALE.

THE day following this conversation, Lawrence intimated his intention of leaving us ; nor did I oppose it. I was no longer apprehensive for his health, and I was desirous that he should work out in, solitude, the ample matter for reflection which this and similar conversations had given to him. I foresaw that he would consult his confessor ; but I was also persuaded, that in proportion as he shewed

himself disposed to enquire, his confessor would insist on the higher duty of submission; and this, as I well knew, would prove the very course to stimulate enquiry. My calculations were not erroneous;—but for the present I must leave him.

The information which my father had collected was voluminous, and required both arrangement and abstracting; it was also confidential, and hence he employed me, with the concurrence of the minister, in this duty. It greatly enlightened me on the subject of Jesuitical intrigue: the subtle manœuvres, the extensive combinations, the unscrupulous Briarean agents by whom all the arts of cajolery, and intimidation, and corruption, in more modern times embodied under the convenient phrase, “agitation,” were practised, to secure the ultimate success of a measure, just in itself and judicious in its principle, but which the timidity of good men and the undisguised

machinations of many bad men, would never have suffered otherwise to be carried out, will perhaps, hereafter, form a curious chapter in political history.

It is matter foreign to my present subject ; I pass it by with the observation that those who cherish the moral heroism of their country's rulers, will always regret that the two great measures of the age,—Catholic Emancipation and Negro Emancipation—should have been achieved by a resolute “pressure from without,” instead of being spontaneously conceded to the natural equity of the demand, by the magnanimity of a generous Legislature. It was not graceful to contest the battle-field of expediency, inch by inch, against the public opinion of a nation pre-eminently just and moral.

Not without some surprise, and with the deepest interest, I found, by the perusal of these papers, that Harrison was personally implicated in some of the gravest charges that

could be laid at the door of the subordinate agents engaged in furthering the measure. These charges involved a plan for the organization of physical force: treasonable certainly *in its conception*, and only exempt from legal guilt, because all overt acts had been too soon anticipated by the vigilance of the government.

The dexterity with which my father had prosecuted those inquiries which were the immediate object of his mission, had led to the discovery of many illegal practices, and of the parties engaged in them, and developed an organized system of agitation, of which the cabinet appeared to have had no previous suspicion. His first inquiries at Paris had given him a clue which he instantly resolved to follow up by proceeding to Italy.

Harrison had, by means of an espionage far more generally practised in the hostilities of party, than the mass supposes, ascertained the destination of my father within eight-and-forty

hours of his receiving his instructions, and resolved upon an immediate journey, to defeat, and if possible, anticipate his enquiries ; and he had very sufficient personal reasons for this activity. My father's steps were dogged, and he had scarcely embarked at Marseilles before Harrison reached that city. I have some reason to suspect that they did fall in with each other in their tour ; but it did not appear from these papers, and, for obvious reasons, I could not with propriety interrogate my father on any subject connected with them, on which he did not take the initiative. He soon, however, gave me an opportunity of partially satisfying my curiosity. After I had been engaged for nearly a week in taking such chronological notes as were necessary for a lucid arrangement, he entered my room to enquire what progress was made.

“ You have found some curious things about our friend Harrison ? ”

“More curious than pleasant. Who is he? he seems to have been much trusted by his friends at Rome.”

“I’ll tell you another day, Henry. You will think it odd, but your mother knows more than myself about him.”

“I am silent; but on another occasion, you may be more at liberty. What first made you suspect him?”

“That is my own secret, not the government’s. I have no personal secret from any of you. Do you remember the tandem accident?”

“I am not likely to forget it: it meets me at every turn.”

“Were you present when Cyril examined and tied up the papers?”

“Certainly; I was with him the whole day.”

“Did you notice any thing particular in his manner of doing it?”

“I did not particularly observe him; but I know that he repeatedly asked Lawrence if he had recovered all the papers from the broken writing-case, and I think he enumerated them, as they were numbered.”

“But did you notice that he retained any?”

“I did not, but it is possible; he seemed to glance at them, as I supposed, to observe if they appeared imperfect; but if he retained any, he must have managed it by sleight of hand;—but now I think of it, I have since heard from Agnes, or Lawrence, that some were missing.”

“Cyril was far more honest than his father, but equally sagacious. Do you remember that when he came, poor fellow, to spend his last hours with us, it was self-invited?”

“Not exactly so; but on our way from Cambridge, after the Senate-house, he certainly offered to accompany me home, for which I was too grateful, as you may believe.”

“Did he give any reason for the offer?”

“No; but I knew that he was not less attached to me than I to him, and he said that he had much to explain about Cecilia.”

“I have no doubt that his warm affection for you both induced him to keep back his real motive: his main object was to see me, and to put into my hands the very papers which he had intercepted.”

“Cyril do this! You astonish me.”

“Have patience till you hear all. As matters have turned out, he could scarcely have done a wiser thing: even a transitory glance at the papers in question, sufficed to assure him that they were most dangerous evidence against the possessor, could he be identified with them. He knew that I was in the House for a government borough, and his first act was to place them in my hands, sealed, as documents of importance to himself, not to be opened without his permission.”

“ At first, I declined the charge, but when he added that you were interested equally with *himself in my accepting it, I set it down to some boyish folly (you will excuse me, Henry), and I received his packet.* Before his alarming state sent me to the Glen, he thought himself dying, as you will remember; and, in your temporary absence one morning, he came into the library, and communicated his fears to me before he had mentioned them to you. He then told me, that if any thing happened to him, I was at liberty to open the packet, if I would not use it to his father’s prejudice: of course I assented.

“ Some time after his death, recollecting—nor shall I ever forget—the hard material of which his father was made, I was tempted by curiosity to use the permission his son had given, and found to my infinite annoyance, that his life, in all probability, depended on my honour. I have never yet disclosed the con-

tents of the papers, nor can I. The best security for my honour was to burn them; *but I had my eye upon the man, and my mission to the continent enabled me to expose the treason without compromising the traitor.*"

Here was a clue to all my Paris persecutions! It was not till afterwards that I learned—but I may as well mention it now—that, from papers found in Cyril's desk when I surrendered it unexamined, to his mother, Mr. Harrison inferred that these important documents had been confided to my charge, instead of my father's, and at all hazards, determined to intimidate me into the restoration of them. Farquhar's accidental recognition of the portrait seemed to present the ready means.

No wonder that Mr. Harrison was averse to meeting my father; no wonder that, at his wife's death, ignorant of the extent to which my mother had become acquainted with papers

in her possession, he hastily resolved on breaking up his establishment; nor was it more a matter of surprise that, in all his visits to Paris, and in his movements through France, he had studiously concealed himself, and obliterated every trace of his route: but there was still much that remained obscure.

“And what,” I asked my father, “is Farquhar’s connexion with him?”

“Ask me nothing: I will tell you, unasked, everything that I feel at liberty to communicate,” and he left me.

I was still pondering over this narrative, and comparing it with my recollection of all that had lately occurred, so as to explain the manifold mysteries incident to these occurrences, when the servant announced a visitor to me.

“His name?”

“He declined to give his card, Sir.”

Concluding that it was some well-known acquaintance, I desired the man to bring him

to my room, when a whiskered, moustached, and bearded dandy presented himself, whose features I could not recognise for a moment, till he announced himself as—Farquhar !

With his usual cool assurance, he approached the table which was covered with my father's papers, and without ceremony, seating himself at it, began,

“ Well, old fellow, how do things go with you ? ”

“ At present you see that I am much engaged, (and I began to collect my papers with anxiety) if you have any communication to make, a letter will find me here.”

“ Engaged ? ” he answered, taking up a paper ; “ why, you have done with problems—and now I see it, this is your governor's writing, not your's.”

“ Have the goodness to replace it on the table.”

I could have knocked him down for his

impertinence; but I was sensible of the importance of self-possession, and with forced calmness and formal politeness, I continued—

“May I ask the object of your visit?”

“Why, surely a man may call upon an old friend without giving offence!”

“Still, in *your* case, I wish to know the object of your call.”

“As you please—friend or enemy, same thing to me; I can be either, and to some purpose—I need not remind you of that.”

I quite lost my temper at this insolent reference to the past, and retorted—

“You can be anything but a gentleman or an honest man.”

“For my breeding, Stanley, I refer you to the ladies, and for my honesty, I can only say that—I was never tried for theft!”

Of course, I rang the bell in silence, and desired my groom, who answered it, to open the street door, and show him his way out.

“Very well,” he said in going, “and you decline hearing my business?”

I became sensible that I might be throwing away an opportunity of acquiring useful information, and motioning the servant to retire, I desired him to proceed.

“’Tis my own affair, not your’s; so I need not hurry.”

“You must, indeed, if you wish to be heard. If you need my assistance, I will listen; for any other object, I would not exchange three words with you.”

“Then, in three words, you can tell me, and nobody else can or will; am I safe?”

“Safe! what do you mean?”

“You know my connection with Harrison; ’tis an awkward matter, this affair of his; must I too, leave my ‘D. I. O.’ in Downing Street.”

“‘Harrison!’ ‘your connection!’ ‘awkward matter!’ what in the name of wonder are you talking of?”

“ State prisons are not pleasant,—are they ? and then indictments and prosecutions, and all that ; in short, am I in for it ? ”

“ *You* in for it ! who on earth would dream of troubling himself about the sayings or doings of so insignificant a personage as yourself ? ”

“ Insignificant ! Yes, I am *rather* insignificant (as he contemplated himself in the mirror)—rather so. I wish I could get them to think so in Downing Street ; but they seem a little afraid of me—and perhaps not without some—little—reason ; but we, agents in such matters, do now and then make ourselves of a little—a very little—consequence ; besides, some people do say, that—it is a hanging matter—beheading at least ; and I own that I think my head—possibly—a little too good for the block.”

The tone of sovereign conceit with which this speech was uttered, intermingled as it was

with most self-complacent hems and grimaces at every pause, was too rich for me, and I burst into fits of laughter ; but nothing could disconcert his vanity.

“ ’Tis no laughing matter. I fancy you thought a distant view of the galleys bad enough ; make allowances for a man who has the headsman in prospect.”

“ A halter is the best you can hope for ; a cat-of-nine-tails a far more probable distinction ; but for mercy’s sake have done with this nonsense, and tell me soberly and promptly too, what do you want ?”

I spoke with such decision that, with some show of serious meaning, he plainly told me that he was afraid of a State warrant, and came to me, expecting that, as an *employé* of government, and an old acquaintance, I would apprise him truly of his danger, and lend him twenty pounds to join Harrison abroad !

“ Not, you know Stanley, that I am in want

of money: I have plenty of my own, but, obliged to play at hide and seek, I can't get at it easily; and as to Harrison, why I can't get at him either, without the tin, or he would give me enough. As soon as we marry,—and it can't be long now—I'll pay back with interest."

My disgust was unbounded, but I contained myself. He misconstrued my silence.

"Oh, not convenient, perhaps! pray say so—never mind. I didn't like to ask Cecilia, especially as she is not at hand; but *n'importe*, she will remit as much as I want, by 'papa's' orders."

"Where is Cecilia, then?"

"Excuse me there, Stanley: no secrets of my own from an old friend; but ladies' secrets must be respected; no—can't tell you that, indeed."

"Where is her father?"

"Out of harm's way; safe enough."

I did not believe two words that he said, jealous and indignant as I felt; yet I made one more attempt, to test the extent of his information.

“Where is Agnes?”

“At Jericho, I fancy; she is not one of us, you know.”

I was ready to burst with the effort to seem composed, and conscious that I could no longer sustain it, I drew my purse from my pocket, counted out notes to the amount of twenty pounds, and offered them.

“Here, take the money; and if you ever wish to discharge the obligation, hang yourself at the first lamp-post you meet after the grateful fit has seized you.”

He quietly counted the notes, put them in his pocket-book, and replied,

“Thank you, Stanley; I’ll do as much for you another time. My marriage will settle all scores between us.” And he left me abruptly, obviously well satisfied with his booty.

CHAPTER VII.

“ I have sought thee in the courts, fields, and gardens, but I have found thee in thy temples.”

LORD BACON.

ANGRY as I was, Farquhar's conduct, on subsequent reflection, relieved my worst fears. “ Cecilia marry such a contemptible wretch as you ! the thing is impossible ;” to which my father, to whom, at the first opportunity, I reported the whole scene, of course added, “ and if she would, she does not deserve to be my daughter.” My mother, however, was not so well persuaded of the impossibility ; but as I

knew not all her reasons, I attributed her doubts of Cecilia's taste to the notorious incapacity of women to judge correctly of each other, and listened with impatience to her many kind, but by no means consolatory suggestions, of being prepared for the worst. I was mad to start on another pursuit of Cecilia, but I knew not which way to turn to follow up the search ; and even my ingenious and ever-ready friend, Franklin, could not help me."

"If you can't bag your game when you find it, I can't mark for you ; but you and Lawrence are a brace of good dogs, though you range rather wild. I advise you to hunt in company ; if you come upon your birds, stand and back each other ; let me hear that you make a staunch point, and I'll soon be with you to bring them down."

And this was all the counsel he could give me ; nor was it without its good sense, though there was a spice of ridicule in the sporting slang in which he expressed it, and a touch of

absurdity too in the idea of two disconsolate and rejected swains starting on a pilgrimage in search of their Daphnes. I determined to consult Lawrence at once, and I rejoiced that he remained ignorant that Agnes had so lately been an inmate of the same house, and quitted it abruptly to avoid meeting him ; but I soon found that this additional circumstance was not wanted to strengthen his conviction that his position with her was hopeless.

“ On that point,” he said, “ my mind is settled ; and you may possibly think less worthily of me as a lover, but better as a man, if I add that, attached as I am to her, my first duty and my first desire are to be reconciled to my father, and the first use of my renovated strength shall be to obtain his pardon.”

This frank and noble avowal raised him immeasurably in my opinion.

“ Would to heaven that Agnes had heard that speech ! your peace would have been made there, at all events.”

“ I am not so sure of that. Agnes would die at the stake rather than apostatize from *her* faith : inconstancy to faith is, next to inconstancy to herself, the most heinous of crimes in the esteem of every woman.”

“ Why so ? especially in your case, where I suspect love had the greatest share in gaining the proselyte !”

“ Simply for this reason : that constancy is the most valuable, if not the brightest star in the heaven of romance and chivalry ; caprice, mutability, fickleness, or by whatever name you will call the failing, is with woman but another name for weakness, except in her own person ! I talked over the subject with Agnes before she knew the extent to which I had yielded to her father’s ‘ conditions,’ and I well know her sentiments. ‘ No man,’ she has observed, ‘ can plead conscience as his excuse, without admitting that, up to the hour of his new profession, he has taken little pains to inform it ; and what

can I think of him who, at the age of twenty or twenty-five, has for the first time felt the force of conscience sufficiently to enquire into the foundation of his hope? Or what security can you give me for the stability of a man who glosses over a love of change on the most important of all subjects, with the pretext of awakened conscience, after five or ten years of acknowledged torpor? Perhaps, after five or ten years more, the same newly-acquired sensibility of conscience may make him turn again; and find me the woman who will knowingly give her hand to a weathercock! Conscience is, truly, a well-oiled pivot for such revolutions. No, no, Edward; you may depend on it that conscience has very little to do with the matter—honour and principle still less.’ What can I hope for, Stanley, after receiving many a sermon like this? The day may come when she will understand me better, but I must not attempt to force it; my policy is to leave her alone till she finds it out for herself.”

“I fancy the day is not very remote; my own opinion is that you have undergone no change at all.”

“That was her father’s doctrine; he satisfied me that I had long been a Roman Catholic, though unconsciously.”

“And my doctrine is, that you are still, as unconsciously, a true Protestant; still of the Church in which you were born!”

“Explain yourself. I can’t wear a double character with sincerity; and I know that I *am* sincere.”

“Wherein does your faith differ from mine? I will give you a turn as father confessor. Do you believe in sin, actual and original?”

“Of course I do.”

“And in the sufficiency of the Great Atonement of our Saviour, and his never-failing intercession?”

“No doubt.”

“In the history of his life and sufferings, as recorded in the Gospels?”

“Certainly.”

“And the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to follow his commandments, as practical evidence of our sincerity?”

“Most assuredly.”

“And do you hold the doctrine of resurrection to eternal life, to receive judgment for our works, whether good or bad?”

“So far, I admit, Stanley, we are entirely agreed; but this is only a fractional part—a few heads, as it were, of our religious faith and duty.”

“A fractional part! a few heads! Why, to my mind, it comprises the whole! What have I omitted?”

“I will retort your process. Do you believe in the actual presence of our Saviour in the sacred elements?”

“Certainly not; neither do you, or you would feel it incumbent to worship, instead of feeding on them. There never yet existed a religion, pagan or revealed, which taught its

votaries to worship its gods by eating them ! In a figurative sense, as indicating a spiritual food, nothing can be more natural or appropriate than this periodical acknowledgment that our faith must be fed as well as our bodies ; but the ‘ actual presence ’ involves a physical impossibility ; for, though one can scarcely mention it without a profanity that I repudiate and abhor, the sacred elements must, on your hypothesis, have been long since exhausted ; and, if revived by daily miracle, are no longer the same material substance, except to outward sense. Again, our Saviour arose from the grave in the same body in which he was crucified, and so ascended to heaven, in the sight of men and angels ; but, though his spirit is omnipresent, his material body, with which, after his resurrection, he fed upon fish and honeycomb, cannot be in two places at once. Much learning was once expended on this vain controversy ; but I doubt if you will find, in modern times, a single honest and intelligent

Roman who will receive the Eucharist in any other sense than we do, though as a tenet of their infallible Church, they dare not avow their disbelief in transubstantiation."

"Let it pass. Do you believe in the necessity of absolution?"

"Entirely."

"And by the priest?"

"As the minister of God, undoubtedly: not *ex suo motu*, but as an authorized instrument of the Almighty pleasure."

"You admit liability to the pains of purgatory?"

"Substitute for that word, 'eternal punishment,' and I do. We both agree as to the fact of punishment, *non absolvente Deo*: of the locality, the nature, or the extent—except that it is irrevocable and perpetual—we have but little information to guide our creed."

"Is not confession opposed to your principles?"

"Certainly not; but I would confess to God, who can forgive: you would confess to man,

who cannot forgive. Confession is not a scriptural term to convey knowledge, where all is known already ; but to express that prostrate, self-humiliating contrition, which is everywhere conspicuous in the penitential psalms. Confession to man is not enjoined upon us, except to those whom we have injured ; and if not commanded, it is an act of dangerous tendency : it subjects the guidance of conscience to foreign control ; substitutes responsibility to a fellow-creature, for responsibility to our common Creator ; it invests a stranger with domestic knowledge, alike inconsistent with domestic peace, and with generous confidence in our social intercourse. If it is partial, or restrained, your Church holds it dishonest, and the absolution inoperative : if it is sincere, your priest becomes the recipient of secrets that purity, honour, and good faith ought to preserve sealed up hermetically from the world, and all his penitents are reduced to mere automatons at his will !”

“ We have long since disposed of ‘ infalli-

bility.' But what are your objections to our Church, if, as you intimate, the differences between us are so small?"

"They resolve themselves into this: on fundamental points of faith essential to salvation, I verily believe that we are agreed; but in reducing our faith to practice, you refer to the judgment of man, what we refer to the word of God. We acknowledge no intermediate accountability; we recognise no vicarious power, but that which the successive wisdom of ages has, on Scriptural authority, accorded to the instruments of God's service, and determined to be essential to the tranquillity and good order of every Church. Even then, we jealously test the exercise of the power by the rules of Scripture, and obey or disregard it accordingly. This simplicity of system, governed as it is by one uniform principle—one unchangeable authority, has now for above three centuries maintained itself in pure adherence to the faith on which it was erected: while the Roman Catholic

Church, though built on the same foundation, has, by throwing itself upon the erring judgment of man, rather than the unerring wisdom of the Bible, become inextricably involved in a maze of subtleties, mysteries, and contradictions, from which no simple course of practical religion can be deduced, and which, in many instances, have extended an article of faith, sound in itself, to practices not less revolting to good sense, than opposed to the very faith they are intended to sustain. But they subserved the worldly policy of ambitious Pontiffs, and a crafty priesthood, and, to retain such useful means, it was declared heretical to question their honesty, or their propriety. Still, conscience was unsatisfied: to soothe its dangerous murmurs, ‘infallibility’ was proclaimed as inherent in the Church, through Apostolic gift:—thus men were forbidden to question that which they could not comprehend, and conscience was bribed into approbation, when Scripture incited it to condemn.”

“Illustrate your position, Stanley.”

“With ease. You believe, with us, in abso-
lution, but you give to man the power, though
you admit mercy to be an attribute of God.
You do homage to our Saviour as the Son
of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father
— so do we: but you extend the worship to his
virgin-mother, and even to holy men,—as if
holiness could reflect the prerogative, as well as
the character of the Deity. You invoke the
intercession of our great Mediator in prayer,
in which we can conscientiously unite; but you
insult the dignity of his mediation, by calling
on the Saints to back it, as though Christ
himself were not all-sufficient.* You recog-

* There are few of the practical errors of the Church
of Rome that, at first sight, seem so plausible as the
efficiency of the intercession of the saints. Can it be
questioned that the “spirits of just men made per-
fect,” do employ themselves in intercession at the
Redeemer’s throne? Can it be doubted that the object

nise, as we do, a future state of punishment ; but you limit its duration, and give even

of their prayers is the improvement and salvation of those with whom they once associated on terms of affectionate equality ? Will not the sainted father pray for the beloved offspring whom he has left on earth ? or the infant that has gone before him to heaven, for the venerated parents that first led him in the right way ? And if such is their occupation, why are we forbidden to put up to them a prayer that may remind them of our wants ? There is a laudable romance of affectionate as well as pious sentiment about this reasoning, which betrays one's best feelings into approbation of it ; but yet, if investigated closely, it is absurd as well as idolatrous : absurd, because we have no authority, either in analogy, or in Scripture for assuming that the spirits of just men are open to any communion with those whom they left on earth, or that they retain any, even the purest of earthly affections ; we have rather cause to infer the contrary—that all is lost in temporary oblivion of the world ; absurd too, because the very perfection of their new and exalted nature, on which we rely for the efficacy of their prayers, is a guarantee that, unsolicited, they will discharge this or any other duty

to the sinner the power of *abridgment*. You acknowledge, in common with us, the resurrection of the dead to eternity of life; but you qualify the doctrine by appending to it an interval of lustration. You bow, with us, to the omniscient impulse of the Holy Spirit; but you go beyond us, and bestow infallibility on all his acknowledged ministers. You assent to our principle, that confession is the act of a broken and a contrite heart, and grateful to an offended God; but you

imposed on them. But it is an idolatrous absurdity: prayer to God is prescribed to us, not as the means of informing him of our wants, which are well known to him already, but as a solemn, habitual recognition of his Almighty power; as a confession that omnipotence is centred in him alone; and in this view, all prayer to a created being, even an archangel, is incompatible with that peculiar and exclusive homage which the deity has emphatically claimed for Himself. Prayer, even to our Saviour, if we did not believe in his divine nature, would be equally incompatible with duty to God.

ascribe the same gracious acceptance of the act, to confession made to man. You receive the Eucharist as we do—so far as you are allowed to receive it all—as a holy memorial of our Redeemer's death ; but you substitute for the simple and natural metaphor of the command, a *literality* of construction, involving such physical absurdity as a perpetual miracle can alone remove : and even thus miraculously assisted, your theory involves daily breach of the second commandment of the decalogue—you invoke the omnipotence of Him you worship, to enable you to violate his own commandment : and lastly, you maintain with the same sincerity as ourselves, the truth of the sacred Scriptures, and deduce your faith, even in its extravagancies, from that unquestionable source ; but you reserve to your priests the interpretation of those Scriptures, and thereby, restrict to a privileged class that Gospel which our Saviour himself addressed to all the world."

“Yet, you will allow that the zeal with which the Roman faith is sustained, its splendid and imposing forms, its decorated ceremonials, its self-devoted priests, its majestic temples, its inspiring choirs, its lofty ritual and solemn ordinances, seem to appertain, as of natural and becoming right, to the only Church that can boast the glorious designation of ‘the True.’

“I allow your zeal—it is the only peculiar merit of which you have to boast; the zeal of self-aggrandizement is always honest and effervescent. Could I, for a moment, believe that such zeal were dictated by the same spirit that led St. Paul, I, too, should be staggered—I, too, should be inclined to say, ‘the faith that can produce such fruits, may err, but must be substantially right;’ but the doubt would be only momentary: such pageantry well becomes the piety of a religious people. It partakes of Heaven to hear a nation shout in unison, ‘Walk about Zion, and go round about her;

tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.' Angels might exult, archangels might glory in the triumph, if all the energies, and all the soul of our country were given to restore its temples to the grandeur, the dignity, the holy majesty worthy the ark of God; but the pageantry alone, however gorgeous, will not satisfy me; the temple of Jerusalem never was more splendid, never more revered, never perhaps, better served, than at the time when those who ministered in it, and to it, crucified its Lord. The earthly and visible temple of the Church of Rome, with its foundation resting on every soil, and its ministering priests in every nation, and its influence, even shorn of political power, still insinuating itself in every latitude, may well impose on the idle imagination of the young and thoughtless. Yet one thing is wanting, and that one thing

we possess: consistency with the word of God and fearless challenge to the proof. We have lost somewhat of our splendour; we have abated somewhat of our enthusiasm; we have been less careful of the seemliness and the symmetry of our appearance. We have been less bigoted to the externals of our rank, and too indifferent about the graces of our public position; but we have for three centuries, boldly challenged enquiry into our title, and resting it on the Scriptures as its only foundation, we still hold ourselves erect and firm, in all the simple dignity of conscious right. Could the Church of Rome make the same boast, with justice, I should be more inclined to allow your inference, though it is, at best, but an argument *ad captandum*."

"Yet I own to you, Stanley, it is the argument that most captivated me. It is difficult to withhold conviction, when every glance around us gives strength to the position:

consecrated walls deserted, or, at best, only exhibited for money as a spectacle to the antiquary; choirs, no longer echoing, night and morning, with the sweetly harmonious chaunts of true devotion, but occupied by a discordant school of charity boys; aisles and cloisters no longer open to unstimulated piety, but closed to all who want the fee of avarice, and for one short hour in one hundred and sixty-eight, grudgingly restored to the service of Him in whose honour they were built; when I daily witness these desecrations of all that we are taught to deem holy and venerable, and trace in the liturgy of the establishment, a warm spirit which it inherited from the Church of Rome, and which well harmonizes with the holy melodies of its cathedrals, how can I but distrust the vitality of that faith which permits it all, unchecked, and carelessly reiterates, in cold hebdomadal observance, the impressive ritual of which you justly boast, as a work

only inferior to the volume of inspiration ?*”

* I fear that there is scarcely any secondary cause by which so many young men are misled, as the vindication of some of the forms of the Church of Rome by partial quotations from our rubric and liturgy. It seems to be forgotten that our Prayer-Book was compiled by the Fathers of the Reformation, at a time when the minds of the people, including many of the converts to the reformed Religion, was still strongly imbued with affection for the attractive rites of the parent Church ; many of these rites were in themselves innocuous, and it was a sound policy, worthy of the wisdom of the learned compilers, to avoid all unnecessary provocation to popular feeling, by limiting their changes to matters of imperative necessity. Yet the time does seem arrived when a judicious revision of our liturgy appears due to the altered character of the age. As an instance or two of the Popish residuum to be found in our liturgy, I may notice in the litany, the prayer for delivery from “ sudden death,” which, if literally taken, would involve some not very orthodox conclusions ; but if referred to the practice of extreme unction, is perfectly intelligible ; and again, in the service for the visitation of the sick,

“ You have not done justice to your argument, Lawrence ; you might, with equal force, urge the

“ and by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins ;” it is the more remarkable that this form should be retained here, when in the absolution in the daily service, it is, “ He pardoneth and absolveth.” The Communion service might be most usefully altered, for the unfortunate translation of the word *κρίμα* in the passage extracted from the eleventh chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, has kept back ten times as many from the holy table, as the most impressive exhortations, whether in the liturgy or the pulpit, could ever induce to attend it. *Κρίνω*, the verb, does certainly include ‘ passing judgment,’ among its other meanings ; but even that interpretation does not necessarily imply a damnatory judgment, and to render it “accuse,” would be equally correct. In the very same verse, the same root is found for *διακρίνω*, where, in combination with the participle, it is rendered “discern ;” and in the 31st verse, the same derivation again occurs, and the compound word is rendered “judge ;” while in the 32nd verse, where the verb is used without the preposition prefixed, *κρινόμενοι*, no final or irrevocable sense can possibly be given to it, consistently with the word

incongruity of red-coated, long-gaitered ministers of God, holy ambassadors from heaven to

παίδευόμεθα that immediately follows; for how could we be “chastened,” that we should not be condemned, if we were condemned already? It is clear that the word intends either self-accusation or correction, but not damnation, and in this sense it is often used, both in the *Iliad* and in *Thucydides*; but as it stands, explanation is useless: people will take the word as they find it, and so taking it, turn their backs on the altar. The length of the morning service, the arrangement for introducing the Sacrament at the conclusion, and many minor points, would seem to deserve the serious attention of our ecclesiastical rulers; and perhaps nothing would tend more to conciliate the desiderated ardour than a judicious restoration of our chaunts and anthems. While all the pomp of Popery was yet recent in our recollection, Puritanism may be pardoned for its reluctant disposition to distinguish between superstition and appropriate ornament; but will any sober Protestant of the present day avow, that he feels farther from God when an auditor of our Cathedral service, than when the same services are performed in chilling simplicity within the unfurnished walls of a proprietary chapel?

earth, with a hunting-whip or a fowling-piece for their insignia of office, and a sporting cer-

Where such alienation is really felt, it may possibly be attributed with more justice to the sermon than the service ; for it must be confessed that, as a general rule, we rarely meet the Gospel in our cathedrals, unless formally and tightly laced up in good, stiff, orthodoxical stays !

Even the chaunting of our responses is a habit that might be advantageously revived, for it is founded on a correct principle. The human voice, when raised by hundreds together, in every variety of note and tone, is as discordant as the braying of a herd of wild asses ; to avoid this unseemly and most offensive jarring, our liturgy provided that those parts in which the congregation unites, should be chaunted ; or in other words, recited in the same note ; in fact, every parish clerk in the country, to this day, chaunts the word "Amen," with more or less of musical recitative ; and were the custom extended to the entire service, as in our cathedrals, it would conduce not less to the solace of the ear, than to the dignity of the celebration.

I allude in the text to the ambiguous enunciation of our articles of faith, and for the reason I there assign, it

tificate for their credentials—beings who no longer catch men, but rabbits; or vary their game as a bench for bagging poachers, or regulating the secular business of life by Blackstone, in lieu of the Bible; these, and a thousand other instances of insult to our faith, will be daily exposed in a free climate like ours, where a man's sins, yet more than his virtues, are hourly held up to public gaze: they argue, I admit, a criminal laxity in ecclesiastical rule; they do more; they imply apathy in the public

may, I admit, be problematical whether much alteration can be safely made; yet, with the deferential hesitation becoming a layman, I venture to express a doubt whether, among them, the 9th, 13th, 17th, 19th, 20th, 23rd, and 25th articles might not be translated into terms equally safe and far more definite. So far as it is possible to human infirmity, we ought by this time, the middle of the nineteenth century, to know what we mean, and be able to express it clearly; at all events, with the aid of a learned episcopacy.

mind, and indifference in those to whom its spiritual culture is entrusted. But these failings in our Church,—and in reference to their aggregate amount, they are no more,—however mischievously they may be quoted by its enemies, afford no evidence against its general purity and soundness, any more than a few fissures and settlements in its antiquated walls, denounce the cleanliness or the safety of an Elizabethan mansion, whose hearths are still warm, and whose casements are still open to the light. In some sense it is a necessary incident to that freedom of research which our principles invite; the very offenders may plausibly reply to conscience, ‘The members of my flock have the Bible open to them; they can judge for themselves if I expound it truly: if I do, my example will not counteract my exposition.’ I defend them not; I reprobate their oblivion of the sacred office, and their pollution of it by worldly pleasure

or secular engagement; I charge upon them the hostility of dissent, where they thus justify reproaches to our discipline. The holy character cannot be laid down with the black coat that indicates its solemnity; nor even in light amusement, however innocent in itself, should a clergyman seek relaxation. I cannot imagine St. Paul dancing a quadrille, or St. Peter figuring in a polka, or St. James holding a hand at a rubber; but yet I maintain that the Church which such men unworthily represent, is not to be judged by the conduct of a small minority of its weakest ministers. By the same rule the Church of Rome would be committed, not by the proceedings of its working clergy alone, but of many of its highest prelates; the tiara itself is by no means unsullied. Two or three jewels in an imperial diadem may have a flaw in them, but the brilliancy of the crown will yet shine with undiminished lustre. And now,

Lawrence, am I wrong? To which Church do you belong?"

"Your question is premature. I will not challenge controversy, for my object is 'truth;' yet answer me this: do not the articles of the Church of England, or, more correctly speaking, does not the twenty-eighth article, while it affects to denounce transubstantiation, convey the denunciation in words that recognise the doctrine?"

"The words of that article are very obscure. As respects our articles generally, they are open to the same remark. To 'partake,' to 'take and eat after a spiritual manner,' are terms of ambiguous meaning, and to define a process so ambiguously expressed, as 'the mean whereby the body of Christ is eaten,' is only accumulating one ambiguity upon another. Queen Elizabeth and her advisers were people who fully appreciated the danger of being too explicit in graduating faith, when so great a

work as the Reformation of Religion was in hand. It certainly would have better become the manly honesty of our Protestant principles to have announced its articles of faith in terms that could not be misunderstood; but such frankness might have created hostility, which it was more prudent to avoid. If St. Paul 'became all things to all men,' in matters not involving the essential objects of his mission, our royal and right reverend reformers had a safe precedent for their prudential mystification.

“Nor was this their only apology: you must bear in mind that many of the subjects of our articles are essentially mysterious and profound; they scarcely admit of close definition by the imperfect language of humanity. Even in these days of critical acuteness and intellectual superiority, it might prove a difficult task to treat of such matters in language not open to the charge of ambiguity. Yet the article, in

one particular, is clear enough: it refers to Scripture. 'This is my body,' says the Scripture; and what does it mean? According to the Roman Church, that 'I am actually and corporeally present,' whenever and wherever the sacred rite is performed; that is, that one perpetual, constant, and never-failing miracle is daily exhibited to all the end of time; nor would it be difficult to prove that, upon such a principle, the miracle must, of necessity, co-exist with eternity. According to the English Church, the command implies no miracle at all. It is a metaphorical expression, equally significant, infinitely more intelligible, and perfectly consistent with sound philosophy.* Both dis-

* It may seem scarcely decorous to call sentiment to our aid, in the interpretation of Scripture; yet I cannot forbear from offering a remark that seems to sustain this construction of the command, "Do this in remembrance of me." The bequest of some token of affection, by a dying friend, as a permanent memorial of him, has

putants agree on one point,—the Sacrament is ordained for the nutrition of the soul, not of the body; of the immaterial, not the material part of man. It would be strange indeed, if the immaterial portion of his frame were thus, by divine order, to be fed by material food! to feed the soul on the pabulum of the body, would, according to all analogy, be as absurd and unsatisfactory as to feed the body on the

been common in all ages and in all countries. Our Saviour's destitution of worldly property precluded the possibility of His thus gratifying the affection of His followers, even had it suited the solemn dignity of the occasion; but there was an emphatic simplicity, in perfect keeping with His holy character, in thus consecrating, as it were, the meal required by the daily necessities of nature, to tender recollection of the sufferings that He was about to endure through love for them. It gives yet greater force to the propriety of the sacred bequest, when we recollect that as the love was universal, so the memorial is such that all humanity can wear it.

pabulum of the soul ; or, in vulgar language, ‘to live upon air.’ It is an orthodox rule for the interpretation of Scripture, as much as for the construction of an epic, ‘*nec Deus intersit.*’ If we can arrive at a plain meaning, without a miracle, we may be pretty certain that it is the true meaning, especially when every other construction necessarily involves miraculous agency. May I now repeat my question ; to which Church do you belong ?”

“ If you are right, to both, I fancy.”

“ Then you will find that it is a corollary—that, as a member of the Church of England, you have not apostatized from the Church of Rome ; but as a convert to the Church of Rome, you are, virtually, a renegade from both.”

“ How so ?”

“ Because those doctrines which are essential to salvation, are common to both ; and those errors which have carried out sound doctrines

to an absurd and idolatrous system, are consistent with the fundamental principles of neither ; yet they are peculiar to the Roman Church, and constitute the only real difference between us. Thus, you become a convert to error in practice, and not to other doctrine ; your creed, in its all-important articles, remaining unchanged.”

“ Stanley, I will not answer your questions precipitately ; but thus far I pledge you my word ; I will, for at least a week, devote myself to consideration, in true Protestant independence ; that is, in sole reliance on the Scriptures. If I am convinced of error, I will avow it as boldly, but with more humility, than I assumed my new profession. In either case, alas ! farewell to Agnes ! ”

It was the determination of a manly mind and a right spirit, and I was satisfied.

CHAPTER VIII.

“What complexion is she of?

Swart, like my shoe.”

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

THOUGH I utterly discredited Farquhar's boastful avowal of his intended and early marriage with Cecilia, I could not persuade myself that it was a lie without any colourable foundation, and it provoked much jealous anxiety. Still, he had allowed facts to escape him which, when I turned them over in my mind, tended to convince me that whatever might be his ultimate expectations, the con-

summation of his hopes was remote. It was clear that he was in want of money; he confessed that escape to the continent was the object of his immediate anxiety; and it might be inferred from his saying that Cecilia had her father's orders to supply him with funds, that she was still in England, but that, for some reason or other, he was not particularly desirous of availing himself of his credit with her.

These reflections relieved me much, and might have dispelled anxiety, had he not been an avowed renegade, and therefore, *a priori* disentitled to credit, except so far as personal interest might guarantee his veracity.

My long conversation with Lawrence took place the day after Farquhar's call: I had remained with him to a late hour. On returning to Dover Street, I found a note from Franklin, stating that accident had called him suddenly from town, and that his return was

uncertain. I was unwilling to obtrude further on Lawrence, uninvited, for I felt assured that he would honestly discharge his promise of "considering" his position; and the less this duty was interrupted, the more certain I felt of the result. Thus I had before me a week of undisturbed leisure, to complete the task which my father had assigned me; and then I was at liberty to prosecute a design which I had secretly formed — of tracing Agnes, through whom alone I could expect to obtain information of her sister.

When Agnes quitted Dover Street, I was absent at the Glen. With the decision that characterized her, and distrusting, probably, her resolution to withstand my mother's entreaties when seconded by her own heart, she had taken her departure within an hour of forming her determination, and without any formal leave-taking; going away in a hackney-coach, and leaving only a note to my sister, to

state that she had proceeded to the convent to which her father had directed her on his departure for Paris. Perhaps she supposed that the address was known to my mother : however this might be, she left no other ; nor did we receive a line from her, and thus we remained as ignorant of her abode as of Cecilia's. To find it out appeared to be my natural course, and not one involving any serious difficulty ; and, when my work was finished, I set about this affair in good earnest.

I had but one or two facts to guide me : ten days previously, a certain hackney-coach—(there were no chariots or cabs in those days)—had taken up a young lady and her portmantau, at a particular house in Dover Street, between twelve and two o'clock in the afternoon. It was certainly a very cold scent, as Franklin would have said : the servant could recollect calling the coach in Piccadilly, but the number,

the colour, the description of the horses or the driver, were all circumstances that he had never dreamed of noticing.

I applied first to the waterman.

“ Bless you, Sir, I sends fifty coaches a-day to Dover Street : dosen’t I, Bill ? ”

“ Why, for that ere matter, Sir,” answered Bill, slowly taking a short pipe from his mouth, “ for that ere matter, I can’t say as Dover Street is much good to us, barring the otells : mayhap ’twas an otell fare ; was there boxes and rat-traps ? ”

“ There was a portmanteau : I don’t know what you mean by rat-traps ? ”

“ Mayhap you don’t, Sir ; but I never seed a woman,—lady or lady’s sarvent, as didn’t travel with a score on ’em.”

I saw that nothing was to be learnt from the waterman ; but, having taken up some of his time, I gave the man a shilling, and was turning away, with some disappointment, which he

noticed, and asked me for a description of the lady, as he might chance to "hear on her."

"She is tall; dark hair, dark eyes, very slender, and about one-and-twenty; a lively, cheerful face, and well-formed features."

"Pretty dear! she's as like wot my missus wos, as two peas. I be sure of finding her," said the waterman; and as I thought it quite as likely as that I should, I gave him my address, and promised him a guinea if he succeeded. The man grinned intelligence; and, as I stopped on the pavement, I heard his comment to Bill,

"Love's a blind hoss, arter all, Bill; but a good un to go."

I saw that they were in earnest, and I anticipated the result with more confidence than I had at first felt; yet the waterman was anything but a feathered Mercury: he had but one leg of the accustomed materials, and it seemed a little too short for its ligneous companion,

though aided by a huge sabot of an inch in thickness.

It was not till late the following day, that my emissary called on me.

“ All right, Sir ; ’twas Nick Baily as druv the coach. I knowed the young voman as soon as I ’eard of her black eyes. There’s a coach at the door ; but you understands, Sir,” and he put his forefinger to his nose, with a cunning wink, “ not a vord of the guinea, or I’m blowed if I doesn’t see nuffin on’t.”

I was astonished by the quickness of the man in thus acquiring, in a few hours, information which I had been puzzling myself for days to obtain. Before I entered the coach, I left a line for my mother, to say that I would bring Agnes back, if possible ; and then I got in, and reflected on the rhetoric by which I was to persuade her. Lawrence having left us, removed a considerable difficulty, certainly ; but Agnes was a woman of delicacy as well as firmness ;

and I had much reason to fear that she would refuse to return, not only to avoid any temptation to break her resolution, but that she might not be guilty of the indecorum of running after a lover whom she had discarded.

On the other hand, I might reasonably urge that, after her recent condemnation of his apostasy, (which could not be deemed a personal offence), and all but openly engaged to him as she had long been, the most buckram etiquette could not find fault on the score of propriety; while the constancy of her purpose was not likely to be assailed by anything short of recantation: an improbable contingency, and less likely than ever to occur, if, after severe and dangerous illness, his principles remained unshaken. Had Agnes been one of those common-place characters that one meets with in every drawing-room, after nine or ten o'clock in the evening,—full of new novels and new parties, new faces and new music, and perfectly

content with such repletion, these arguments might have been efficacious; but she was high-minded, and high-strung: with all her playful vivacity in conversation, she acted, when action became necessary, not upon the impulse of the moment, but on well-digested principles,—the growth of years. The tenderness of the woman overcame her when accidentally surprised into a knowledge of her lover's dangerous state; his unconsciousness made the indulgence of her feelings safe: yet, as soon as his consciousness returned, the heroine revived, and she had gone abruptly, leaving not a word for him, and concealing all traces of her movements from us.

One who could act thus resolutely, was not likely to be diverted from her settled purpose; and, on full consideration, I decided to limit myself to the simple matter of fact, that she was as little likely to meet Lawrence at our house as at her convent. I was still consider-

ing how to mould my arguments in the most persuasive form, when the coach stopped, the door was opened by my guide, and a single step sufficed to place me in a narrow, unlighted passage.

Advance seemed dangerous, and, never having set foot in a convent, I felt it the more dangerous, from some inward, undefined impression that a convent, and a cell of the Inquisition, were pretty much the same thing. Fortunately my guide was close behind me, (as guides too generally are), and I appealed to him for direction: "Up two-pair back," was his answer. Concluding that I was entering the holy retreat by the back-stairs—the best approach to all dignified places—I followed his directions, and found myself in a small room, some twelve feet square, where a tall woman, with her back towards me, was engaged at the washing-tub. She scarcely turned her head, as she exclaimed in a peevish tone:

“What’s the use of teasing me so often? I told you I can’t send the things home till morning!”

“Who wunts ’em, Peggy? Here’s a gemman has something to say to you.”

“Who is he? My eyes are dim in all this haze of steam.”

“Your eyes are well enough, if you’d use ’em: ’tis only them, as I fancy, that’s brought us ’erc. Don’t you see the gemman?”

“Sure enough I see him; but if he sees me, he don’t know what to say.”

I saw her very distinctly: a huge, brawny, tall, black-haired, black-eyed woman of five-and-twenty, “standing well on her pins,” as my friend the waterman termed it, and carrying herself well at all points. It admitted of no question that, in person, she tallied sufficiently with my tale, to vindicate his claim to my guinea; but could it be possible, that even a hackney-waterman could confound such a

woman with the light, elastic, laughter-loving Agnes ?

“ There is some mistake, my good woman ; I came in search of a young lady, Miss Agnes—”

And, unwilling to mention her name in such society, I stopped abruptly.

“ Good as my neighbours, I hope, Sir, or a little better ; nor can I say I’m not a woman : but what, may I be so bold as to ask, do you want with Miss Agnes ?”

“ That can be of no consequence to you, as you know nothing of her.”

“ You come in queer company, Sir, but you seem to be a gentleman. What brought you here after Miss Agnes ?”

“ A lady, whose christian name is Agnes, left my father’s house some days ago in a hackney-coach, and we wish to trace her.”

“ But you’ve not told me what brought you *here* ?”

“The waterman of the stand from which her coach was called.”

“Lord-a-mercy ! these ‘ gentlemen ’ can never answer a plain question. Am I like the lady ? or what made ’em bring you to me ?”

“ I cannot say. You have no resemblance to her, except that your hair and eyes are black.”

“ But there’s a hundred women with black hair and black eyes, in every street. Did you give no better account of her ?”

“ I only mentioned that the coach took her up in Dover Street.”

“ Dover Street ! Well, that’s coming to the point. I take in linen for two families in Dover Street, and, when it’s heavy, I bring it in a coach : I see how it is ; and you say her name is Agnes ?”

And she hesitated, as if pausing for reflection, rather than for an answer.

“ Agnes is not a common name, like Anne.

I saw it the other day on some of my linen, and I can't precisely remember where; but I noticed it for its oddity. Was she at Hitchcock's?"

"No; their hotel was full, and we have lodgings next door, in a house belonging to them."

"And she was in a great hurry to be off? The porter came to me three times over-night, and again the next morning. I remember it all now: as I could not get them ready, I sent her things after her: at least, the porter did."

I started in joyful surprise, little expecting such a *finale*.

"Where did you send them? You shall have the reward ten times over."

"Never mind rewards, Sir. I see it is a love matter: mine, somehow or other, always went wrong; the last, I fear, worse than all. But I am always ready to help an honest matter;

so if you will leave it me, and say nothing, I'll find her out for you : at least, I'll find her things, before I am a day older."

" Won't the porter remember ?"

" Not if *you* ask him, you may be sure ; but if I ask what has become of my linen, he daren't say ' no. ' "

I had my purse in my hand in an instant, but the kind laundress intercepted me.

" No—no, Sir ; if I am right, you shall pay me well : not till I've earned it."

My gallantry, at that time of day, was too young to discharge my anticipated debt upon her lips, according to the accustomed form in all Scott's novels ; but I felt very grateful ; and, not too greatly to stigmatize my gallantry, I am bound in fairness to add, that her jetty hair and eyes were the only points of similitude between her and Cecilia, or Agnes either ; while the hair was certainly—perhaps because the steam had subdued its natural elasticity—not

in the most exquisite arrangement. I took her address, and returned home with a cheerful heart.

I was sorely tempted; but my impatience had too often worked disappointment, and I never asked the porter a question. I even had the forbearance to keep to myself the information I had obtained; but I could not conceal a feeling of satisfaction that played upon my countenance, when I reached Dover Street just in time to find that dinner, tea, and all the domestic routine of the day was over. I was now secure of discovering Agnes, and, through her, Cecilia; but I smiled at my own sagacious excogitations a few hours previously, in the hackney-coach, when meditating with equal certainty of seeing her, how to persuade Agnes again to become our inmate.

As I had unexpectedly found time to discuss the point with Lawrence, who was more directly interested than myself, I proceeded, early the

next day, to his lodgings. He was not at home: he had gone away the previous evening, and was not expected for some days. I concluded that he had returned to Highgate, in the character of a penitent, though not a prodigal son; and, having no reason to expect the call of the black-eyed laundress till the evening, I directed my course to his father's house. I was embarrassed by the first question of Mrs. Lawrence,

“When did you see Edward?”

“I have been much occupied for the last week: I have not seen him at all.”

“I am sorry for that, Mr. Stanley. His father has come round beautifully: had Edward been here to see him, I really do think we should have had no more 'plexity-fits for a year to come, at soonest.

“Edward will be here, you may be sure, as soon as he knows that he is welcome.”

“No fear of that, Mr. Stanley—no fear

of that, if he will be a good boy, and say nothing about conversion and conscience, and all that. There is nothing my poor dear husband hates so much, as to talk about conscience and conversion. I'm sure Edward would hold his tongue, and think to himself if he must think, did he know how his father hates thinking at all: it's that thinking, Mr. Stanley, that puts everybody out."

"Have you written to him to tell him so?"

"Oh, Mr. Stanley, I did so wish to write to him! but his father—he is so irritable, poor man, when he hasn't his own way—he wouldn't let me write to him or see him; and he asked me every night and morning if I had. What could I do?"

"Well, I will see him, and tell him every thing you have said, if you will give me permission."

"Do—pray do: you are so good, Mr.

Stanley. Pray see him, and beg him to see his father; only don't say I said so, for my poor man would never forgive me."

I found that Mr. Lawrence was absent, having, with returning health, resumed his attendance at the counting-house for a few hours every day, and I returned home, too apprehensive of failing in my evening appointment, to endanger it by accepting Mrs. Lawrence's invitation to stay for their dinner, and not a little perplexed at Edward's unaccountable absence.

Indeed there seemed to hang a fatality over all our movements; whenever circumstances indicated a necessity for an immediate meeting, the party wanted had abruptly disappeared; it disappointed me greatly that this new cause of delay should prevent my taking immediate advantage of the present favourable temper of Mr. Lawrence, yet I found it as difficult to obtain a clue to his son's retreat, as to discover Cecilia.

I had now for more than six months been perpetually in search of Cecilia : had obtained a casual glance of her ; had even received what was tantamount to an invitation under her own hand ; had missed her only by an hour or two at her own home ; and yet, had failed not only in meeting her, but in finding even a trace of her movements. So long as Agnes was, in Farquhar's phrase, "one of us," she was excluded from intercourse with her own family, by her father's personal apprehensions ; but now that she had left us, it could not but be that she had thrown herself back upon her domestic relations, and of course, must know their movements. Agnes was the only channel by which I could obtain access to her in whom all my warmest affections were centered.

And here I may as well answer the question of one or two saucy critics, who have done me the honour to read my manuscript before pub-

lication; "What made you so desperately in love with Cecilia, of whom you have told us nothing, more than that she was a pretty girl, with black eyes, and a little more wise and prudent than yourself?"

It is, indeed, a very puzzling question. To explain in three words the difference between the schools of Plato and Aristotle, to compute the elements of the last comet's orbit on the surface of a shilling, to simplify, to a young lady at the tea-table, the theory of the undulations of light, are, in these extraordinary times, trifling operations within the compass of every sixth-form boy; a fond mamma is almost ashamed to hear her daughter enquire into such puerilities, and to give a severer tone to conversation, carelessly asks the young philosopher if he has read "my dear Polly's last article in the *Edinburgh*?" But to ask why and wherefore you are in love, is imposing the heaviest possible demand on your knowledge, in the

most difficult of all its many abstruse departments.

I have already hazarded a theory of my own, that there is some mystical language of the eye, not reducible to terms; yet I have heard of blind people being captivated by a tone. Symmetry, no doubt, is attractive; yet a hump-back is not always an antidote to love; gentleness and tranquil cheerfulness are most amiable; but by no means exclusively, or we should not see so many married viragoes; wit and vivacity have innumerable votaries; still, a plain man shudders at the bare mention of a woman's tongue; indeed one of the happiest couples to whom the accidents of life have introduced me, were quartered for a week in the same house with myself, where we daily sat down more than twelve at table, and they were never once heard to speak!

I will defy any man to give a correct and definite answer to such a question: an insincere

"one is not worth having. But, my dear critics, may it not possibly have happened that, few and short as were the hours, that fled like minutes in Cecilia's presence, many were the unutterable things looked, and smiled, and answered? Must it necessarily be that the never-to-be-forgotten glance at Cambridge, heretofore recorded with true historic fidelity, was the only glance that ever beamed from eyes of liquid lustre? Is it quite impossible that many an approving smile, many a sympathizing monosyllable of heart-reaching feeling, many a bright and sunny emanation from the glowing light that warms as well as illumines a tender bosom, may have been seen, and felt, and reciprocated? And that impressions, too deep ever to be erased, and too sacred ever to be exposed, may be judiciously left by the autobiographer, to the unassisted imagination of his reader?

Be assured, however, of one thing; that if man ever loved, I loved her; and if ever woman

deserved man's affection, or was by nature calculated to win it, and by character enabled to retain it, and by principle qualified to use it to its best advantage, that woman was Cecilia! And if, my fair critics, you will imitate her virtues, her fortitude, her decision, her piety, and yet more, her cheerfulness, her generosity, her calm, consoling, unruffled temper,

“ Mutato nomine de te,

Fabula narratur.”

which, out of charity, I will somewhat liberally translate, that “every woman may be a Cecilia if she pleases.”

CHAPTER IX.

“ Ille sinistrorsum, hic dextrorsum abit ; unus utrique error.”

HORACE.

PERHAPS some of my readers may be well acquainted with Oxfordshire. There is, or was at the time to which these pages relate, in one of those beautiful but unfrequented villages which adorn the extensive hilly district between Henley and Wallingford, and which forms the boundary of the county on its southern side, an antiquated mansion of the age of the Stuarts. It was built of dark brick, in no very uniform style,

but approaching to that which is commonly called Elizabethan ; on one side, or rather, forming one wing of the building, four lancet-arched windows distinguished a chapel of greater antiquity than the rest of the edifice, and both wings projected in the rear, much beyond the centre, so as to constitute a court-yard of some extent, forming the principal approach : deep bay windows, of the same elevation as the house, and one or two decorated chimney-shafts, gave to the grand front a massive and solemn tone, which was enhanced by a few lofty cedars that graced the lawn, and some huge, majestic witchet elms, well decked with ivy, and well-peopled by owls ; and so trained by a judicious lopping of their inside boughs, as to form, when viewed from either extremity of the avenue which they overshadowed, a natural Gothic arch, decorated with more beautiful fret-work than the hand of the most skilful mason ever could accomplish.

It was known as the Priory, and being surrounded on every side by a buttressed wall, enclosing more than three acres of ground including the site of the mansion and offices, it is very probable that it had in ancient times been a religious house of no ordinary importance; it was now occupied as a convent, and, through the address of my black-eyed laundress, I discovered that it was the place to which Agnes had retired on leaving Dover Street.

The next morning, at an early hour, I was on the stage for Wallingford, the nearest road, though not the nearest town to the Priory. Here I engaged a saddle horse, and soon found myself at the desired spot, when, for the first time, it occurred to me that even in free England there are spots where liberty is a privilege unknown, and that the inside of a convent was as inaccessible to a young man of two-and-twenty, as the outside to its young and wretched inmates; wretched if they sorrow for the joys

and the duties of social life ; yet more wretched if they can be happy, regardless of them.

Here was a new difficulty ; an impediment more formidable than I had yet found : but it was absurd to return without making an attempt, and I rode up to a little lodge, outside one of the posterns in the wall. An aged and rather infirm man answered my knock, and I begged of him to open the gate ; but he shewed no disposition to comply, after drily informing me, “ ’Tis a convent, young master ; no strangers are admitted.”

“ But there is a lady here that I wish to see.”

“ Very likely ; there be a precious many here, young and old.”

“ Her name is Agnes Harrison.”

“ Like enough ; there’s as many sisters Agnes, as sisters Mary, and they be all one or t’other, I think.”

“ You seem to know them well ; may not I see them as well as you ?”

“When you be as old as me, perhaps you may for aught I know; but ’twill be a hard matter till then, I trow.”

“Well, if you will unlock the gate, I will try my chance?”

And I offered him a shilling, which he took readily enough, as if used to such gratuities, but he did not yield an inch.

“Na, na, that would be an unket job for me, and, mayhap, no better for you, young gentleman! Havn’t ye got never a note? I could do that much for you.”

“Well, well! hold my horse for ten minutes, and I’ll soon be over that wall.”

“Over that wall! How fierce these young ’uns are! Lookce here, young master, do you see that big bell?”

And he directed my attention to an alarm bell at the top of his lodge, loud enough, if I might guess by its size, to awaken a sleeping man a mile off.

“As soon as I sets its clapper• a-going, you would have a dozen dogs, and half as many stout fellows at your back, and afore your face, that would make you meat for the doctor before you reached the great gates ! If so be you can give me a line, I’ll take that for you after vespers ; but I ma’nt let you play the fool in that rumbustical way,—it’s no good to nobody.”

I began to think so too, and, taking my pencil and the back of a letter, I wrote to Agnes a single line, which he promised to deliver at the house. As he told me also that it would be two hours before the evening service concluded, I rode away to a small public-house to which he directed me, to await the result.

Romance, and adventure, may produce an excitement that suspends appetite for awhile ; but the reaction begins with double power, as soon as the excitement is, in turn, suspended. A long journey on the top of a stage, and a ride of eight or ten miles afterwards, had made me

ravenous; and my first business, after feeding my horse (no man of sense or humanity will ever neglect this as his very first duty in travelling), was to enquire what resources the "Leather Bottle" enjoyed.

The means, apparently, were by no means ample: it was one of those little cottages, half farm-house, and half pot-house, which are often found in the course of that singular road, known as the Icknield way, that extends from Bedfordshire to Portsmouth, at the foot of the Chiltern Hills. This road has become, in modern times, merely a green-way for drovers, allowing their cattle a soft tread and a scanty feed, denied to them by turnpike roads, in their long march to the London markets. At a day not very remote, it was much more used by smugglers, who, as one of them has often told me, were accustomed to convey a cargo of run goods, in the course of a single night, all the way from Portsmouth to the Chiltern woods,—a distance of seventy miles—

on the backs of thorough-bred horses. This practice had not entirely ceased at the time when I found myself established at the "Leather Bottle," waiting the termination of the "Priory" vespers.

Unpromising as the exterior of the place appeared, my reception was by no means unsatisfactory. There were no private tables or retired recesses, it is true: no plate, no glass, no cloths or napkins, no obsequious, ubiquitous waiters; but, though nothing was visible in the way of luxury or even comfort, nothing but a beech-wood three-legged table, and two or three chairs of equally patrician character, there was a good-natured welcome that compensated for the absence of almost everything else, and a cheerful acquiescence in my call for dinner, that imparted a perfect knowledge of the substantial implied by the demand. In such a case it is useless to ask, "What have you?" you will be sure to get whatever is to be had

without enquiry: "Dinner" was my only talismanic word, and it wrought wonders.

First I had the eternal 'eggs and bacon':—whenever a country hostess is assailed by a hungry traveller, she produces eggs and bacon as naturally as the hen produces the egg; but, though I have been often gorged by them, I will maintain against all gainsayers, that eggs and bacon are very good things. When my hostess found that I was so far satisfied as to allow her time to turn herself, she removed from the dogs—they had no better range—a pot, on the quality of whose fumes I had been speculating for some time. She poured its contents into a good-sized, earthenware basin, and placed it before me, with an iron spoon that had once been plated, a little smaller than a soup-ladle.

M. Soyer himself could not have presented me with a more exquisite specimen of jugged hare; and, capacious as it was, I soon exhausted

the basin. I had "eaten to completion, and was quite comfortable," as I once heard a worthy citizen exclaim; but the larder of the "Leather Bottle," far exceeded my anticipation.

"Mayhap you would like a little long-tail, Sir?" said the landlady.

And, without waiting for my answer, she placed a cold pheasant on the board. Game was, at this time, tabooed to all but poachers and country gentlemen; but some of the preserves in the Chiltern Hundreds were by no means inconvenient adjuncts to the public-houses on the Icknield way. When I had dined, some excellent whisky and a lemon completely established me, and I began to talk to the landlord, who came in just in time to try the strength of my punch. He was a quiet, cool little fellow, with the look of a fox, and as sly and stealthy in his movements.

"How is the horse?"

"Quite brave and fierce, Sir."

"So much the better; he has some way to go."

"He bean't come very fur?"

I was not so sure of my company as to answer carelessly, for it was said in that equivocal tone that might pass either for a mere idle supposition, or an interrogation.

"Far enough to want his feed before he goes back."

"Then you go further than the Priory, to-night?"

"And what is that to you?"

"I meant no offence, Sir; only as you be come from there, I thought as you might be a goin' back there."

"Do you belong to the Priory?"

"No, Sir; I belong to nobody but my missus there. I sell 'em trifles when they want 'em."

"How can a man get admitted inside the place?"

“No how, as I believe: at least, so I hear say.”

“But you have been?”

“No further than the court-yard.”

“How came you to know then that I have been there?”

“You bean’t the first, Sir, as has been there to-day. But the bell and the bloodhounds together, with that unket old thief to set ’em on, would keep out old Nick, if he bean’t there already.”

“And what took you there to-day, if you can’t get admitted?”

“I had a bit of a letter to deliver; but ’twas of no use, and I’ve just brought it back again.”

“Would they not receive it?”

“There bean’t nobody there of the name; but may be there’s some mistake, for the gentleman as giv’ it me, was very down about it.”

“What name was it?”

“Here comes the gentleman: mayhap he’ll tell you hisself, for I doan’t remember. I giv’ it him back again.”

And just as he had said the words, in walked Lawrence!

It would have been difficult to say whether his astonishment or mine were the greater, or whether the wonder of our host did not exceed either.

“Lawrence!”

“Stanley!—is it possible? What brought you here?” were our mutual exclamations; and the same answer was returned on either side. My story was soon told; but Lawrence’s involved more detail.

“That villain, Farquhar, has done me.”

“Farquhar! Why it is more than a week since I gave him twenty pounds to take him out of the country.”

“Very likely; and he has done me out of

fifty. Though, had he told me the truth, I would not have grudged ten fifties."

"When did you see him?"

"The same day as you did, I fancy; for it is above a week ago, and he made the same excuse, that he wanted to go abroad."

"And Farquhar told you that Agnes was at the Priory?"

"Yes. I would not give him a penny—the rascal affected only to borrow it—till he told me where she was; and when he had written down her address I gave him fifty pounds, and now it seems he lied."

"There I can't agree with you. I admit him a liar of the first water; but I too traced Agnes, as I thought, to the Priory."

"And what was *your* errand to her?"

"Nay, don't be jealous: how can I find Cecilia, except through her sister? But you have more to tell me yet: what was your own

errand to Agnes, after what you said when we last met?"

"To tell her that I am a fool."

"She knows that already!"

"But she does not know that I am a fool-penitent: and perhaps the greater fool for being a penitent, only you made me so. She must thank *you* for *that*."

"My dear Lawrence, does your father know it?"

"He ought to know it by this time, for I wrote to him to tell him so; but I have had no answer."

"You shall have one. But, now we are here what's to be done next?"

"Return as we came. This letter was my last attempt; for, more adventurous than you, I actually entered the house, but only to be turned out again, with the assurance that the name is unknown!"

By the time we had settled the account and

got our horses saddled, our hostess, who had been sent by her husband to the gatekeeper, brought back my own note, with the same answer, and it determined our course homewards. We were well mounted, and a few hours brought us to town: more vexed, more perplexed, and more disappointed than ever.

Yet this apparently useless journey was not without its subsequent advantage; but I must not anticipate. When I reflected on the subject, I thought there was reason to rejoice that Lawrence had failed in meeting Agnes, for a sudden recantation—of which she knew neither the history nor the motive—far from operating favourably on her mind, would probably have had the opposite tendency.

My first business, the day after our return, was to hurry away to Highgate. I found Mrs. Lawrence at home, but her husband had not yet arrived from the city. She received me with more than ordinary cordiality.

“I have so wanted you, Mr. Stanley ; for sure, never a poor woman was more worried than I have been since you were here !”

“What has happened ?”

“Oh, that unfortunate boy ! Do you know, Mr. Stanley, that almost as soon as you left us, there came a letter to his father. I knew the hand, and I was quite afraid to let Mr. Lawrence have it, for though he seemed to have softened a little, he was very angry if I ever mentioned Edward. Well, the next day but one, while I was still thinking how to edge the letter in quietly and pleasantly you know, and helped the cook all the morning to make sure of his dinner being to his liking—for he’s always in good spirits when his dinner pleases him—who should come in but my poor dear husband, quite rampant ! Edward had drawn on him for fifty pounds !—not that he cares about fifty pounds, or twice as much ; but then, as he said, to draw on him ‘ without your

leave,' or 'by your leave,' was a little too bad: though, poor boy, he always drew for what he pleased, and nobody said nay, till this sad quarrel."

"And you have the letter still?"

"Yes, I have; and I'm sure I don't know what to do with it! I am so afraid of making bad worse."

"Let me deliver it; I will invite myself to dinner, if you please, and give it to him when you have left the dining-room."

And so it was arranged; it was very fortunate for me that a speculation on which old Lawrence's anxiety had been bestowed for some time, had that very morning, been crowned with success, and almost the first thing he said, after a very satisfactory dinner, was—

"You shall both drink my health in a bumper! I'm come home just £5,221 10s. richer than I left, thanks to Russia tallow! Prices were rising all the week, but I did not dare realize till

to-day, when I had too good an offer to refuse. I believe I might have done better though ; but it's best to be safe."

I drank his health cordially, and would not be content without adding, "all the honours ;" my cheers, though there was nobody but himself and his wife to hear them, quite won his heart. The lady presently left us to ourselves.

"Ay, I do know a little of the market, I believe, if I know little else ; 'twas a very good hit."

"I think that I can crown your news to-day, Sir !"

"Eh ? what ? is the foreign mail arrived ?"

"No ; but a domestic one, of which I am the bearer."

And I produced the letter ; he took it rather hesitatingly, as if he would have refused it had he not been taken by surprise and felt at a loss how to vindicate a refusal, on the spur of the moment ; as it was, he turned the letter over,

laid it down unopened, and drily enquired, how I could be the bearer of a letter which had the post-mark ?

“ Your wife gave it to me ; it came by the post ; but I believe I know the purport of it, though she does not.”

“ The young reprobate’s apology for drawing for fifty pounds, I suppose.”

“ I do not know *that* ; but if it is so, I presume that he smelt the tallow.”

And old Lawrence, with a complacent smile that he did not attempt to conceal, opened the letter, and read it with grave attention, which, under the circumstances, I had scarcely expected ; nor did I regard it as very auspicious. When he had read it, as I thought, twice over, he folded it up very deliberately, drew from his side pocket a huge letter-case, in which he slowly deposited it, and, filling his glass without speaking, pushed the bottle to me. I filled mine, too, in silence : after a pause of nearly five minutes, which I

dared not break till something fell from him to guide me, he abruptly asked,

“Where is the girl now?”

“That is more than either of us can say, Sir.”

“So much the better; so much the better—she’ll only jilt him; these Papists are never of the same mind two days together.”

“I hope you are mistaken.”

“Mistaken! I am not often mistaken, Stanley; witness the tallow contract, where everybody said I was wrong; who is right *now*?”

“We all know your sagacity in such important matters, Mr. Lawrence; but as to Edward, I am sure you were mistaken.”

He shewed strong symptoms of bristling up, and I hurried to the end of my sentence, resolved to be heard before anger produced the usual deafness of impatience,

“He never was a Papist in his life!”

“Never a Papist in his life! It is you that are mistaken, Mr. Stanley, or you would not try to

cram me that way ; never a Papist ! why the young hypocrite told me so to my face !”

“ He fancied he was, himself, when he had never seriously thought about it ; he knows better now.”

“ No doubt he does ; no doubt of it ! He smells the tallow, like a fox : this is another Jesuit’s trick of his ; but he’ll not trick me, nor will you, Mr. Stanley, I can tell you that.”

I determined to “ bide my time,” and remain silent, for I was sure that the honest old fellow would instantly repent of his rude allusion to myself, and give me an advantage. I was right ; he hemmed a little, shifted his chair, and filled his glass, and at length made the *amende* in his own peculiar vein.

“ Your health, Stanley ; your health ; I am sure you are an honest lad ; wish I could say as much for Ned.”

“ I can, Sir, and a great deal more ; we young men want your wisdom and experience, but we

often know each other better than our fathers know us.”

“Ay, ay! ‘ ’tis a wise father,’ you know the proverb, Stanley; but you are very much after my own heart, though I can’t suspect myself of your paternity; so tell me, boy, what you have to say, for I see you won’t leave me at rest till you do.”

And he leaned back in his chair with a sort of deliberate resignation to a long story; but I cautiously avoided being too diffuse, though it was difficult indeed to make a hearer so utterly uninformed on polemics, comprehend that substantial identity of faith on which the whole question of Edward’s tergiversation hinged. But old Lawrence was very clear-headed, though very superficially informed, and I could well perceive that I had made an impression, when, after an interval of full ten minutes, which elapsed in silence, he exclaimed,—

“The upshot of the whole is, that he and

the girl are of the same mind, and I am too old-fashioned to know my own faith ! Well, so long as Ned is neither hypocrite nor renegade, there is a chance for him yet ; but d—I take me if I ever before heard of a Protestant-Papist ! 'Tis very like the old story of the mermaid cooking her tail for supper : people reduced to the last extremity do sometimes make both ends meet in a queer fashion ; but you have had your hearing, and I have had his letter ; so Mrs. Lawrence shall give us some tea, and I'll not take another glass, that I may think over it soberly. Do you intend to be a parson, Stanley ?" And, familiarly taking my arm, he half pushed me into the drawing-room, as if distrusting his good resolution to quit the bottle.

During tea, and for some time afterwards, he remained with us, conversing so cheerfully and even affectionately, in a kind of playful tone, that I was not surprised when, on quitting the room, he desired me not to go without giving

him an opportunity of saying good night ; nor, when at last I was compelled to leave, at his giving me a letter for his son, with an emphatic injunction not to lose it. I was too impatient to know the contents, to omit delivering it the same evening, and I found Lawrence in a state of intense anxiety. He tore open the envelope ; and, after glancing at it, handed it to me with an emotion too strong for words. It was short ; and to the point.

“ I fear, Ned, you are but a piebald Protestant after all, and young Stanley no better : but he is a good friend, and you may yet be a good son. Here’s another fifty pounds to help your reform ; you may thank Stanley and the tallow. “ Your affectionate father,

“ E. L.”

And a check for the money was enclosed.

Half my triumph was complete ! He would have gone to Highgate the same evening, but I

dissuaded him with some difficulty, and only succeeded by promising to accompany him the next morning. We were there by breakfast, which the old gentleman's recent indisposition had now habitually delayed to the indolent hours of fashionable life. He had not left his room when we arrived; but it was speedily whispered through the house that "Mr. Edward" had returned home; and the pleasure which it afforded to all parties was soon made apparent by the domestics flocking in, in rapid succession and on flimsy pretexts, to salute him. It always looks well when the joy of the parlour spontaneously extends itself to the servants' hall.

These homely yet hearty greetings were yet passing, when his mother's voice was heard, crying, "Where is he? where is he?" in tones that spoke the hysterical turbulence of maternal love; she rushed into the room, screaming, sobbing, laughing, her grey hair floating in disorder on her neck and brows, her toilet not

half completed; and in an instant he was locked in her arms, and there she held him till he gently disengaged himself, and, supporting her trembling steps, placed her on the sofa.

“You have been ill, Edward? very ill; I’m sure you have;” (what can deceive a mother’s eye?) “I don’t think you are well yet? It’s all those nasty college ways of reading; but we’ve got you now, and you shan’t open another book for a year to come at soonest: promise me that, that’s a dear boy.”

Before he had time to answer this somewhat unreasonable demand, his father had quietly entered; in the burst of feeling with which his mother had embraced her son, Mr. Lawrence’s approaching steps had been unheard. His look was studiously grave, and would have been severe could his jovial and open features have assumed a stern expression; he had clearly predetermined against any scene of sentiment, and done his best to carry out paternal forgiveness with

patriarchal dignity. In strict conformity with this sagacious resolution, he first addressed me, his wife having as yet, I believe, been actually unconscious of my presence

“Good morning, Mr. Stanley ; ’tis a fine morning ; how d’ye do, Edward ? Didn’t look for you so early.”

But it was all in vain ; there are some points which affectation cannot reach ; even though backed by anger and sturdily sustained by pride ; Edward approached him, extending his hand with respectful submission, and his father accepting it, and drawing him towards him, kissed him again and again with warm affection, while tears fell down his cheeks, *malgré* all dignity and determination.

“Don’t deserve it, Ned ; don’t deserve it ; but deuce take me if I can help it,” and then, as if eager to divert attention from what he seemed to think undignified weakness, he turned suddenly on his wife,

“What d’ye mean, Betty, by coming down to breakfast in that trim? do you see me with my night-cap on?”

“La, Mr. Lawrence! How can you think of a night-cap when Ned’s come home?”

“Then Ned shall go back again till you make yourself decent: don’t you see Stanley here?”

And, in truth, I felt thankful for this domestic interlude: the reconciliation was my own work, and the supreme satisfaction which I experienced in seeing it perfected, began to operate a little on my eyes, though I had neither paternal nor fraternal apology for the weakness. Old Lawrence gave up the city, and his wife deserted the kitchen, for one happy day. We loitered through the garden; visited the conservatories; regulated the hot-house, and took a morning drive together; I would not lose sight of my patients. I was allowed, unchallenged, the imperial authority of a doctor, and I availed myself of it to carry

Edward back again in the evening, for I feared the recurrence of any discussion that might tend to re-open a wound so recently healed.

All parties acquiesced in this arrangement. It was an additional comfort that I heard not a word from the elder Lawrence in reference to Agnes, and the younger told me on our ride home, that, with his knowledge of his father's habits, he augured more favourably from his silence about her, than even if he had been disposed to rally him on the subject. "He never utters a word in jest, on anything that he calls 'business,' till it is over; and I have long been aware that to get me married to somebody or other, is, with him, a matter of serious 'business;' indeed, I suspect that I am more indebted to this feeling than to your arguments, for our reconciliation; though, but for your kindness and ingenuity in finding an apology for retracting, without wounding his pride, I fear he would have been implacable for a twelvemonth more!"

CHAPTER X.

“Jura dabat populo senior.”

OVID. FASTI.

THE session was far advanced, for it was not the custom then to sit through August, Ireland and long speeches not having come into fashion ; and (a greater advantage still) gentlemen being less frequently permitted, if equally disposed, to address the House, unless on their own peculiar subjects, there was not only a greater power of elocution, but a vast deal more common sense and good taste in our unreformed legislature,

than in that of the present day. The "management" of the Lower House was not confined to a ready plausibility of reply to every question, or a dexterous parry of an unexpected thrust, or a prompt counteraction of some mischievous party manœuvre ; there was an allotment of parts, a distribution of duty, highly convenient for the dispatch of business, and conducive to general enlightenment ; but which required much address on the part of the leaders on either side. Some privileged men there undoubtedly were. Whitbread would bark and growl on every subject, and at every turn ; Grattan would O'Connellise in moderation ; Burdett champed the popular bit with an impatience that was often troublesome. Romilly was always ready with his criminal law, and Brougham with his colonial policy. But these were privileged exceptions ; as a general rule, the House was well governed ; Perceval, by his amenity, and afterwards Castlereagh, by the courteous dexterity

with which he could make members “turn their backs,” on a troublesome intruder, more easily than “on themselves,” secured a wholesome deference to the pretensions of acknowledged men, and we were spared long Edinburgh essays, three-sheeted newspapers, and a 12th of August session. We have gained largely by Reform in all but every-day legislation.

What this digression has to do with my subject I really do not know; but, in looking back over his shoulder a man sees more of the landscape he leaves behind him than of the particular road by which he has travelled, and is tempted to observe the effect of distant perspective, on craggy rocks and wooded plains, with which he has been familiar in detail. I have no better apology to offer.

My father had determined to pair off for the rest of the session, that we might all refresh our somewhat drooping aspect in the salubrious air of our native county. I was as desirous as any

of them for the change, for, since our first arrival in town, our domestic varieties had been productive of anything but pleasant adventure, and it struck me that Agnes, if practicable at all, would be more easily induced to visit us at our country-house than in London.

When I explained to Lawrence the circuitous process by which I had arrived at the same information which he had obtained immediately from Farquhar, he agreed with me in thinking that Agnes must still be at the Priory, though, for reasons that we could not fathom, she had been denied to us. I had, for some time past, been compelled to act upon my own unassisted discretion: my father was so absorbed by parliamentary duty that he had no time to listen to me; and my mother had put a check upon my communicating with her by the restricted confidence which, as she said, Mrs. Harrison's statements on her dying bed had compelled. Franklin was still absent; and, to

be honest, my bootless visit to the Glen had exposed me to so much ridicule, that I was reluctant to revive the subject. But as soon as I found my father quite released from the calls of public duty, I reported to him every step that I had taken, my visit to the Priory, and all the fruitless result. He listened with grave attention.

“And now,” said I, “tell me, what shall I do next?”

“Did I not apprise you, young gentleman, that it required greater wit than yours to play your cards? But you must needs go travelling about the country, at your own discretion, with no better guidance than a wooden-legged waterman, and a black-eyed washerwoman,—

· *Romæ rus optas ; absentem rusticus urbem
Tollis ad astra, levis.*’

So now you will please to remain quiet at home, for the two or three days we yet stay here :

take care of your sisters, ask no questions, and leave the rest to your mother and me."

His self-satisfied smile assured me that he had good reason for his counsel, and disposed me to cheerful compliance; though I was as much at a loss as ever to conceive how anybody, whether parent or not, could make love for me better than myself: and, in truth, I remain pretty much of the same opinion still. It seemed strange too, that I heard nothing from Franklin; but soldiers are not given to letter-writing—and as to the little affair between him and my sister, I have often noticed, in flat contradiction to Shakespeare, that nothing runs smoother than the course of true love, between matter-of-fact, good-humoured people: it is only your human eccentricities, with talents a little above par, and tempers far below it, that get into such awkward dilemmas on these occasions: so, as the thing seemed to be thoroughly under-

stood on all sides, both in theory and practice, this little episode to our domestic drama “created no sensation,” and in no way affected anybody’s proceedings but our own.

I awaited our departure with tolerable composure ; yet there was one reflection that would occur, and recur with painful frequency, however strongly I contended against it : Cecilia had never attempted, by a single line, either to myself, to my mother, or even to Agnes, to renew acquaintance with our family, or to inform herself of our movements or feelings. I could not avoid serious misgivings that, if there were no new engagement formed, there could be but little inclination to encourage my approaches.

It was not for nearly a week that we found ourselves *en route* for home : we were delayed by an engagement to a party, at some distance from town, to which I was not invited, but which my father and mother felt it right to attend, though at the inconvenience of a night’s

absence. I availed myself of this delay to spend an hour or two at Highgate, where Lawrence was re-established, perfectly reinstated with his father, but obviously in low and almost desponding spirits. I could detect the cause easily enough, in the self-imposed confinement to home which he thought duty as well as policy dictated, till mutual confidence was fully restored; and therefore I urged his father to send him to us for a week or two, representing that his health had of late received so severe a shock as to demand anxious attention. He acceded readily, and, by a little persuasion, I at last brought Edward to consent, not only to join us, but to accompany us home. He was however, very reluctant, till I told him that his story was perfectly well known to all our circle, and redounded to his credit in their opinion no less than in mine.

In our duet in the rumble, Lawrence and I had, on the way, ample opportunity of dis-

~~passing~~ our fathers' plans, and we very dutifully and judiciously resolved that, as soon as we could possibly obtain a temporary release for a few days, we would lay close siege to the Priory, and take it by mining or by storm—by bribery or wall-scaling: for we were more and more convinced, by comparing notes, that Agnes was there, and as we began to fancy, a prisoner against her will. But this was too great a feat to accomplish unaided by Franklin, to whom, we well knew, it would be a frolic of the most intense delight. With the help of my landlord at the "Leather Bottle," I felt assured that an entrance could be effected; and we occupied ourselves during the whole journey in concocting and contriving schemes for the purpose.

I had some misgivings, I admit, but they were not caused by any doubt of getting access in some way or other, but of turning it to good account when we obtained it: indeed, Law-

rence's apprehensions of Agnes's resolute repudiation of him were far greater than mine, though he had less ground to justify them; for he was still ignorant that she had fondly hung over him in his unconscious sickness, and yet had abruptly left the house the same hour that consciousness was restored: he had not even yet been informed of her mother's death.

The longest day, and the longest journey, will come to an end, according to the old proverb, and so it promised on this occasion. Nothing in the shape of adventure,—not the most trifling accident occurred, to give variety, or interrupt the accustomed formula, “Horses on directly.” “Please to remember the ostler, Sir.” Once, indeed, we stopped a few minutes for refreshment, when the saucy girls had the impertinence to taunt us both with our long faces; and how long this impertinence might have continued, I cannot say,—encouraged as

~~It was~~ by sundry ill-natured remarks of my father, on my demand for a ticket at every gate, and my peculiar fondness for scraps of paper—had I not openly professed my intention of handing over all my quarrels to Franklin. This stopped their remarks, though not their giggling ; it was apparent that, inside the carriage, they had been making game of us the whole way, for reasons best known to themselves.

We had started early, and travelled rapidly, but it was nearly eight in the evening when we arrived, and I was well pleased to see the dinner-table arranged with all reasonable promise of full compensation for a journey of a hundred miles, on the short allowance of a sandwich and a glass of sherry. I hurried Lawrence to his room, that no needless delay of ceremony might retard the appearance of the mutton ; and we were both so famished that slight ablutions served our turn, so that we were the first to enter the drawing-room, which seemed lighted

up with more than the ordinary care of domestic-tics on daily duty ; but others were not so prompt as ourselves. Five minutes passed away, and I rang the bell :

“ Do the ladies know that dinner is ready ? ”

Five minutes more, and I rang again :

“ Do let them know that we are starved ! ”

I rang a third time, when no servant answered ; but there followed a vision which, like the marriage ceremony, left me mute with “ amazement.” The governor and my mother led the van, as if to hide their suite : rearing his tall crest above my father’s head, Franklin appeared, escorting my sister with affected gravity, while Mary followed them, supported on either side by two graceful forms, veiled, and in deep mourning, to whom my father introduced Lawrence, and myself with infinite *nonchalance*, as the “ Miss St. Aubins ! ” For a moment we gaped and stared, as people astonished will do ; but veils are insufficient to deceive a lover :

Lawrence, though for the moment bewildered and confounded, rushed forward with the bound of an antelope, threw back the veil, and in an instant Agnes was in his arms! And, strange to say, without a tear, or a swoon, or any other approximation to a scene, except a blushing yet honest laugh, which said as plainly as tongue could speak, "I was sure that you loved me too well for such a disguise to be successful."

But my case was rather different: I must confess my dullness. I did not dream who the veiled beauties were, till Lawrence instinctively detected Agnes, nor even then had I the same confidence in my reception, or he would not have been beforehand with me. It is very disagreeable, on some occasions, to tell the honest truth; but in this matter I must swerve from precedent, and drop biographical custom—I never felt more embarrassed in my life. *It was Cecilia!* on that point there could

be no doubt : if she did not laugh as heartily as Agnes, she smiled with far more mischief ; and, as she smiled, I blushed and stuttered ; and worse than all, when she said, with a voice scarcely audible,

“ Have you forgotten me, Henry ? ”

I answered, in dreadful flatness of tone and sentiment,

“ No, Miss Harrison ! ”

But it only made her smile more triumphantly than ever : and in short, if all the folly of all mankind, in all the accumulation of successive centuries, from the creation to that moment, had ever centered in one physiognomy, that face was mine. I looked, and I felt the fool complete ; my brain was wandering for a solution of the mystery ; ideas floated through it like fleecy clouds over a summer sky ; I stared at her, I stared at my father, at Franklin, Lawrence, and the whole party. I began to speak, and stopped abruptly ; I felt confused, bewildered,

and almost doubtful of my existence, and where it would have ended I know not, had not my father recalled me to matter-of-fact duty, by proposing that I should escort "Miss St. Aubin" to the dining-room.

I was silent all dinner-time ; I answered "yes" or "no" to every question, and without any very accurate conception of what I was asked, or who addressed me : I had just self-possession enough remaining to notice that Cecilia said as little as myself, while her sister's laughter more than once reminded me that I ought to laugh too, though I could not exactly hit off the proper moment, or very distinctly comprehend the jest. It was very awkward ; Lawrence and Agnes were obviously engaged in the most satisfactory *tête-à-tête* : a very easy matter at a dinner-table, as Franklin proved by a similar gossip with my sister, to which Mary was occasionally admitted, as of special favour. My father occupied his domestic throne with a dignity of an obviously painful

character, while “mamma” looked knowingly at him, and then on this side, and then on that, with a self-complacency that was absolutely provoking ; and so matters continued, till, with the form of the imperative mood usual on such occasions, my mother carried all the feminines away with her. No sooner were the doors closed, than I exclaimed :

“Tell me, for mercy’s sake, anybody who can, what does all this mean ?”

“Mean ! Why that we have got on the right scent at last !” answered Franklin.

“Yes ; but how came they here ?—how came you here ?—where did you find them ?—why have they changed their name ? I can’t understand a word of it !”

“I came by the coach, and so did they ; they have not changed their name, but resumed their own ; and as to finding them you must answer yourself, for you found them first, and first told your father.”

“Then they *were* at the Priory ?”

“Yes; but under their true name of St. Aubin.”

“And how did you know that?”

“Your mother told me; but have done with your catechism: I am on honour with her, and refer you to her for all you want to know.”

As to my father, he was most singularly deaf or absent. I could extract nothing from him, but “really I don’t know,” “very possibly,” “it may be so.”

“Did you expect to meet such a party?”

“It seemed not improbable.”

“How long have they changed their name?”

“Some time, I believe; I made no memorandum.”

“Where is their father?”

“You had better ask themselves: I never enquired.”

“Well, at least you will tell me what induced them to come?”

“Agnes came to see Lawrence: Cecilia, I suppose, to take care of her sister.”

“How long do they remain?”

“How could I ask them before they have been six hours under my roof?”

“Where is Farquhar? Is he coming too?”

“I have not invited him. I will, if you desire it.”

“It is too bad: all of you are in a conspiracy against me. I shall go into the drawing-room; I may find the women more communicative.”

“No doubt: they generally are.”

CHAPTER XI.

“ When man has contended with the tempests of life till his strength fails him, he flies at last to the shelter of religion.”

I WAS not disappointed ; for my mother had left the girls to themselves, and all but Cecilia opened at once, without allowing me time to speak ; Agnes began, the instant I entered, with much coldness of tone and assumed formality,

“ It is getting late, Mr. Stanley, and as we are talking of leaving you to-morrow, perhaps—”

“My dear brother,” interrupted both my sisters together, “do persuade them to stop.”

“Your brother’s powers of persuasion, Mary, are unequalled, except by his fund of table-talk ; but he will hardly exert them with us, for he knows that we are not persuadable beings ; so if he will kindly assist our arrangements for returning to the Priory—”

“Returning to the Priory, Agnes ! good gracious ! you can’t be serious ?”

“Very serious, Sir ; the atmosphere of this place seems charged with serious matter, and I find it does not agree with me ; if, therefore, you will have the goodness to lend us the carriage at an early hour—”

“Does my mother know of your purpose ?”

“She is fully aware of *all* our plans ; my sister is particularly desirous to return to the Priory without delay, as there at least, she says, her friends will receive her with open arms !”

And she laid a malicious emphasis on the

words, which left so little room for mistake, that Cecilia could no longer remain silent.

“Speak for yourself as you please, my dear Agnes; I never said—”

But the disclaimer came too late, for whatever might be her honest wishes, it was interrupted precisely in the way that Agnes designed, and assuredly she had no longer reason to complain of a cold reception! But Agnes was not to be so easily silenced; she quietly looked on, and proceeded as if no unusual interruption had occurred.

“Go on, Cecilia; what were you going to say?”

“How can you be so provoking, Agnes?”

“Oh, that was all, was it? Well then, Mr. Stanley, if you will oblige us by ordering the carriage at an early hour, we shall reach the Priory by dinner; and, should you happen to be the bearer of any more letters, you may as well see that they are properly addressed, to Miss St.

Aubin. It may save you unpleasant encounters with hounds and porters, and hard fare at the Leather Bottle, besides a world of disappointment to us poor recluses, who are always dying for answers to our own idle scraps of paper !”

“ I declare, Agnes, if you go on so, I really will leave the room.”

“ Well, my dear, and if I may venture another word, I think it would be prudent to do so, before the gentlemen come in ; for if you will blush in that extraordinary way, Henry’s father may take it into his head to order the carriage for us, without waiting our time !”

Cecilia took the hint ; or at least my eldest sister did so for her, and they did not return till my mother returned with them ; the girls, in their sagacity, expecting that her presence would be a guarantee that no juvenile eccentricities had disturbed the sedate propriety of the drawing-room ; but they forgot that a new expression had found its way to my features, as well as to

Cecilia's ; and it was quite intelligible enough for my father's eagle-eye to scan at a glance.

"Hallo ! what's been the matter here ?"

"We have been taking leave, Sir," replied Agnes ; "Cecilia wants to go back to the Priory to-morrow."

"And you, too, of course ?"

"Certainly."

And she glanced at Lawrence, as if to notice the effect of the announcement ; but this time, her point was lost ; Lawrence had a comfortable assurance, the grounds of which he saw no necessity for revealing, that henceforth he should be the first party consulted on all her future movements.

It was not till all had retired, except my parents, after the happiest hour that I had yet enjoyed in life that, late as it was, and fatigued as we were, the much-desiderated explanation came.

"I told you," said my mother, "that I had

a secret entrusted to me by Mrs. Harrison, or rather St. Aubin, for that was her real name, and one that I could not then disclose ; nor could I mention it now, had not your father obtained, through Franklin, information that set me at liberty. A word will explain it all. Mrs. St. Aubin was a nun, and had broken her vow in order to marry Cecilia's father. Disgraced and degraded, and even exposed to persecution affecting her life, her husband brought her to England, and both assumed the name of Harrison. In his case, however, as well as in hers, remorse, in all its bitterness, followed with calm reflection ; and with reason : such vows are not less criminal than absurd, as must be every vow opposed to the laws of the Creator ; yet, if an enlightened conscience will never make them, nor a converted conscience recognise their obligation, the feeling of honourable men is opposed to all apostasy, and more especially to that which brings with it release from self-denying,

and self-imposed restraint. The apostate can only hope for the credit of sincerity, by becoming a martyr to his new faith ; and the opportunity, in these days, is, fortunately, most rare.

“ In the case of the St. Aubins, their religious creed remained unaltered, and well might they smart under the sting of self-reproach, when they had deliberately violated one of the most solemn ordinances of their Church. St. Aubin’s great object now was, to obtain absolution from the guilt, and a dispensation permitting its continuance ; he was a man of large property, both in England and in France, with high and influential connexions ; his wife, too, was the daughter of one who had the same advantages.

“ He employed them with effect ; he purchased both the pardon and the indulgence, but on terms that led to all the misery, and all the unprincipled duplicity of his subsequent life. It was stipulated, that his wife should never return to France ; that his foreign estates should

be given to the convent she had deserted, as a compensation for its shame!—that his sons, if he had any, should be educated in the Roman faith; but, under a dispensation, should propagate that faith from Protestant pulpits; and that his daughters should be devoted to the cloister, unless they married Roman Catholics, who would, on the same conditions, become English priests. In case these stipulations were faithfully performed, he was at liberty to settle his English property upon his children, or such of them as complied; failing their compliance, he made a vow to devote it to the same religious uses, immediately on the death of his wife.

“And now, my dear Henry, you have a key to the mystery. When Cyril died prematurely, his father’s whole energy was devoted to secure the marriage of his daughters to men who would serve his turn; but Nature will have its way, and you and Lawrence anticipated him. He

truly penetrated both your characters ; he saw that Lawrence was thoughtless, superficial, and therefore, practicable, and with him he would have succeeded, had he not proposed a condition to which no honourable mind could listen without horror and disgust. He saw that you were impracticable, and, to disengage you from Cecilia, he determined on your ruin.

“To accomplish this with her, he assured her that you had yielded to his infamous conditions ; and he practised the same *ruse* with Agnes, though Lawrence had only partially given way ; for he cared little for their marriage, so long as they took the vows ; as, on either contingency, his English property remained to him. Hence, Cecilia and Agnes determined to reject you both ; for your silence, after the note she enclosed in the miniature, confirmed her father’s assertion to Cecilia ; and Agnes had her lover’s own letter, acknowledging his change of faith, and so carelessly worded as to convey the impres-

sion that he adopted both ‘conditions,’ in all their infamy.

“St. Aubin found in Farquhar a far more supple instrument. This young man, ignorant and vain, soon ascertained that Cecilia was under no actual engagement to you, and flattered himself that he had only to throw the handkerchief. When he discovered, too, that an ample fortune would attend her hand, he was resolved to win *that* at all events, let her heart go where it would; and he readily lent himself to her father’s views. Mrs. St. Aubin found herself dying; she unfolded her wretched story to me, and I apprized your father. You remember that Cecilia left the Glen the morning you reached it: she had resolved to take the veil, being firm in her purpose of rejecting one who, as she believed, had openly apostatized from the religion of his youth; and Agnes, for the same reason and with the same intention, joined her at the Priory, though, at

the time, ignorant of her sister having anticipated her ; for it was part of their father's policy to keep them apart from each other.

“ But how and when did you discover their retreat ? ”

“ We first learnt where they were, from yourself, when you explained to your father a few days ago the fruitless attempts which you and Lawrence had made to get access to the Priory. They only failed because you were not informed of the name by which they were known there.”

“ And why not have apprized us of our mistake ? ”

“ Because the disclosure of their real name must have led to further explanation of matters still under the seal of confidence, and only very partially entrusted to Lawrence by Mr. Harrison ; but let me conclude.

“ Your father desired Franklin to discover Farquhar if possible, and bring him to him. The cowardly temper of this young man, you

know already ; he had worked himself up into a conceited fancy that his connexion with St. Aubin would expose him to a State prosecution, and he attended your father's summons like a criminal ; the rather because Franklin never allowed him to quit his sight till he obeyed it. Your father availed himself of these fears, to extort from him the confession that St. Aubin had already conveyed to him all his property in trust for himself, if he married either of the girls, after taking orders and secretly conforming to the Roman faith ; and if such marriage did not take place, then to hold it for the benefit of the dishonoured convent : Farquhar also stated that, after executing the deeds, St. Aubin had himself entered a monastery, with the purpose of taking the vows.

“ On making this discovery, and obtaining St. Aubin's address abroad, Franklin went to seek an interview with him on your father's behalf : he found the wretched man in a state of high-

wrought feeling, and resolute to expiate his early crime by all that he could now accomplish, the devotion of himself to a cell of unceasing penance; he would not revoke his arrangement with Farquhar, as he considered that he thereby consummated the conditions of his pardon.

“On Franklin’s return with this intelligence, I and your father, guided by your information, and knowing the cause of your failure, went to the Priory, when you thought we were engaged to a dinner-party: whether we have succeeded in disabusing the minds of the ladies of all the false impressions so skilfully made by St. Aubin, you and Lawrence are the best judges; but, on the whole, I incline to think that we have made love for you better than you did for yourselves.”

“No, no,” said my father, “I will allow no such idle boast. Cecilia was greatly touched by the tale of Lawrence’s reconciliation to his father, I admit; but that was merely sympathy with her sister; things did look a

little suspicious this evening too, but a kiss of reconciliation amounts to nothing: Cecilia must yet be wooed and won, and in somewhat better form than at dinner to-day. See how Franklin and Lawrence do the thing; take a leaf out of their book."

"Pardon me, Sir, but I have a little way of my own that I much prefer: your explanation, however, is not perfect."

"As much so I fancy, as your 'little way of your own;' but what more do you want to know?"

"The cause of Mr. Harrison's anger with Cyril?"

"Cyril flatly refused to take orders; this was his first offence; the detention of those unlucky papers was the second. Farquhar owned to having excused himself for their loss, by averring that either Cyril or yourself had secreted them on tying up the parcel."

"Then why did not Cyril restore them to his father?"

“ Because he would not confide such dangerous documents to such hands as Farquhar’s ; he purposed delivering them back with his own, had he ever been able to quit this house again. His first intention in coming to us, on your departure from Cambridge, had been to consult me as to the course he ought to take, suspecting the danger in which his father was involving himself ; and when he foresaw his end approaching, he apprehended that if they fell into your hands you would feel bound in honour to communicate them to me, and that therefore it was the wisest course to entrust them at once to my honour.”

“ Well ; the result is that I get the bride, and Farquhar the dower ; if he is content, so, I am sure, am I—”

“ But I am not, young gentleman, and so I shall apprise Cecilia to-morrow, when I tell her of your folly. She is a prudent girl, and will think, as most people do, that a cloister is better than love in a cottage.

“Very well,” I replied, rather moodily, for he spoke so gravely that I could detect no raillery in the matter. “I tell you frankly that it will be ‘fight dog, fight bear,’ for she shall never set foot in Priory or cloister again, if I can help it.”

“To-bed with you, you undutiful young varlet; ‘to bed, to bed, to bed!’—We’ll fight it out to-morrow:” and, knotting his handkerchief in true school-boy fashion, he flogged me out of the room with a vivacity that speedily communicated itself to my legs, as they mounted the long stairs in double quick time. It was nearly one o’clock, but the girls were still laughing as I passed their door. I knocked, and enquired the reason; the only answer was “Good night! Cecil is arranging her back-hair,” and Agnes laughed again, more heartily than ever.

CHAPTER XII

“ I know no ways to mince it in love, but directly to say—I love you.”

HENRY V.

My mother's narrative had, unquestionably, thrown much light on past occurrences ; yet I cannot say that I was satisfied, nor did I feel at all convinced that anybody had the power of giving me full satisfaction, except Cecilia herself. There was no jealousy in the case: jealous I could not be, after the drawing-room scene of the preceding evening, for, notwithstanding my father's raillery, I felt that there had been a kiss

of acceptance, as well as a kiss of reconciliation, and without the irksome task of a plain, matter-of-fact question. Still I wished to know a few interesting particulars about the fragmental letter that I had found at Glen Cottage, on my bootless errand there ; nor was I without my curiosity as to Farquhar's self-complacent assurance of success.

It is a trite remark, that in all enterprise, the pleasure of anticipation is greater than the pleasure of success. I have my doubts, even as to its general application ; I am certain that in the case of a lover, it is untrue. It may sound strangely to many ears, but I greatly question if there often exists genuine, unqualified confidence, even between lovers, who, to use the common phrase, " understand each other," until that mutual understanding is supported by an engagement publicly acknowledged.

Till then, there is no certainty, and while uncertainty exists, there will be more or less

distrust; yet it is in this unqualified confidence that the exquisite delight of a lover's triumph consists; to pour out the heart without reserve, to disclose the most hidden motives, the most secret impulse, in full assurance of sympathy and participation; to unlock recesses of the breast hitherto sealed to every human eye; this is the real happiness of a lover's success, yet this is a happiness that can never be realized till success is achieved in all the plenitude of certainty. I now felt myself an accepted lover, but as yet I had found no opportunity of availing myself of the privileges of that relation, and I was impatient to assert them.

It is singular how soon women can adapt themselves to any new position, and with what facility they "carry off" the change. Any stranger who had witnessed the family meeting at the breakfast table, on the morrow of the strange scenes that yesterday had witnessed, would have imagined that our party had been

domiciled together from infancy. Franklin and my sister, Lawrence and Agnes, were perfectly at home ; and if to some trifling degree, Cecilia and myself seemed rather more constrained, it was perhaps, imperceptible to any but ourselves. There was but one circumstance that the most prying eye could have noticed as peculiar. While the gentlemen entered the breakfast-room in succession, as they chanced to be speedy in their dressing-room operations, the fair creatures on whom our thoughts were dwelling, joined us in one conglomerate mass, headed, with much dignity, by my beloved mamma ! Yet they distributed themselves with wonderful dexterity, so that, by some strange accident, three duets were sustained in perfect harmony throughout the interesting ‘re-union,’ while my parents and my youngest sister performed a trio in unheeded silence, as I have sometimes wished that other trios could be executed.

My father was the first to break in upon this music of the soul.

“ Who is disposed for a ride to-day ?”

No answer.

“ Or a drive ?”

Still no answer, beyond an inquisitive glance at her neighbour, from every bright eye where many shed a brilliant lustre.

“ I see how it is ; settle it among yourselves ; thank heaven, my love-making days are over.”

“ Not quite, I hope, Mr. Stanley,” interrupted my mother ; “ but these dear children seem so versed in the art, that they are beyond our instruction ; let us leave them to themselves, and they will, perhaps, find amusement till dinner.”

I cannot answer for the rest ; for to say the truth, I saw no more of any of them till the dinner-bell collected us, nor have I the least idea how they were occupied. It is quite inexplicable to me what people do on such occasions, where there is nothing to explain, or be explained ; perhaps they pull flowers and pelt each other

with them ; for my part however, I had serious business to perform, and on intimating as much to Cecilia, she assented, in the most natural way in the world, to “ a long walk,” and never once asked Agnes if she would accompany us.

I cannot pretend to say which direction we took, for really I never thought about it ; nor could either of us satisfy the public curiosity on this point, when interrogated at dinner : it cannot be very material, but our grounds were very extensive, and I doubt if we went beyond them. Our conversation may be more interesting ; the subject of it had commenced at breakfast.

“ Then Farquhar remained at Paris during all your stay at Vienna ?”

“ I believe so ; my father admitted me very little into his confidence, but I repeatedly received letters from him which implied it.”

“ And what brought you to Paris alone ?”

“ Yesterday, Henry, I dare not have told you, but I have no secrets now. I heard of your

imprisonment, and suspected mischief. I thought that, at least, I should find your family, and through them, put you on your guard ; for though I believed you had apostatized, I could not see you persecuted."

"Oh ! dearest Cecil, had I known as much, how little should I have regarded their persecution ! I rejoice at it, as it is that it should exhibit you as my guardian angel."

"My guardianship was not of much use nevertheless, Henry, for my father followed me two days after, and between the watchful vigilance of him and Mr. Farquhar, I became almost a prisoner myself. Your family had left long before I arrived."

"And what made you leave the court so abruptly ? Could you suppose that I should not follow you ?"

"You little dreamed of my position, or you would not ask me ; my father was present all the time, while the people were shouting out our

names together ! I knew he was ⁴here, for I saw him ; nor could I have escaped from the hotel, when I met the huissier, had I not known that he and Mr. Farquhar were both there ; but, till then, I knew nothing about the portrait ; I had only heard of the charge of taking the money. As soon as I was released from my attendance, my father hurried me away in a coach : if you did not see me after your discharge, Henry, it was not my fault, you know ; your anxiety could not exceed mine, to hear from your own lips that you remained true to your faith."

"How could you believe otherwise of me, Cecil ?"

"I never did entirely believe it ; but if you only knew the eternal system of mystery and deception in which we have lived for years, you would forgive me for my credulity."

"Forgive you, my Cecilia ! forgive ?"

And I must confess that I sealed my forgive-

ness with such an ardent impression on the lips that asked it, as compelled me to sue for pardon in my turn: it was cheerfully conceded, but now I think of it, the seal was not attached on her side, and I shall claim it still.

“But that fragment of a letter, Cecilia; that remains unexplained; how came you to write it?”

“Or rather, how came I not to send it? Shall I tell you, Henry?”

“Tell me all—everything—anything, so I but hear your voice of love.”

“Very pretty, indeed; perhaps you can say that again; I delight in pretty speeches as much as Agnes; nay now,—do be quiet for five minutes and you shall hear it all; my poor bonnet!—I shall never get it in shape again, and this is not a place to find a new one. Well now,—I’ll tell you about the letter.”

“Did you send one?”

“No; and I thought that I had destroyed

that draft of one. After the curious scene with which your trial ended, my father was urgent in pressing for my decision, either to marry Mr. Farquhar or take the veil; and, if your vanity will not feel too much flattered, I will own that I was equally resolute to do neither. It afforded me some relief that Mr. Farquhar had been too much frightened by the punishment he received from the Paris mob, to leave his hotel for a week, and thus I was spared his attentions for a time; but when he joined us on our route home, I felt that I had no alternative but to make my choice; and the rather because my father had settled to quit Glen cottage for the continent, as soon as it could be arranged.

“On his sudden journey to see my poor mother, he left me behind to discharge the servants; and, under the impression that this was my only opportunity, I began the letter that you found, but I had not time to finish

it to my satisfaction, and hence I tore it up ; but why I did not write another to the same effect, is a secret."

"No, no, Cecil ; you owned five minutes since, that you have no secrets *now* !"

"Nor have I, Henry ! nor ever will ; my heart was yours already, and, having no reserve, I own it had long been yours ; but when I heard from Agnes of all you had done for Lawrence, and how you had done it, and why you had done it, oh ! dearest Henry, I cannot tell you what I felt ; but my faith sanctions no idol-worship such as I have indulged in since !"

I kissed away the tears that choked her utterance, tear by tear, and yet asked no forgiveness ; but though we may laugh at love, tenderness is too sacred for the tone of levity : I drop the curtain on the scene ; those who have shared such feelings, need no description of them ; those who have not, could not comprehend one.

“Then I suppose, dear Cecil, on the principle that one good turn deserves another, you enlightened her mind, too, a little, or softened her heart a little, towards poor Edward?”

“Certainly not the latter. I soon saw that it required no mollifying; and for the rest, whether it were the ingenuity of her love, or of her conscience, or of her vanity I know not, but assuredly she discovered an excuse for herself very soon after we met at the Priory, not less original than satisfactory; so that when your father and mother came down there to effect her recantation, the work was more than half done to their hands.”

“You provoke my curiosity; what might it be?”

“So complex in its logic that we will make her reason it out for herself some idle day: yet I fear that vanity had the largest share in it, and so I told her. I believe she was more annoyed than pleased, to find that in all poor Edward’s delirious ravings, his mind

dwelt more¹ on his father than herself: if a man *must* be mad, I fancy the best of us would rather flatter herself that she is herself the cause, than allow such influence to anybody else!"

"That is out of genuine charity, because she knows that she has the cure in her own hands."

"But we are not always disposed to use it: you had better not try *me* in that way, Henry, I am of sterner disposition than Agnes; and if you chose to lose your wits, I shall leave it to yourself to find them."

"Truly I believe you, Cecil. I have lost them already, and, instead of helping me to recover them, you reconcile me to the loss! Agnes behaved more uncharitably still, for, as soon as Lawrence rallied his, she ran away as if she had lost her own."

"Yes, but it was only because he had the impertinence to recover his senses without her

help; she really did seem mortified at the monopoly of his thoughts by the agony of his filial remorse, and it led her to the natural inference that, confident as she was of the honesty of his affection for her, such devotion to his parents argued a noble and a generous heart, incapable of that fickleness of purpose which his supposed apostasy had led her to impute to him. She observed to me on one occasion, ‘if affection for his father carries him so far, how I could make him love *me*!’ ‘I believe,’ I replied ‘that he would love you more constantly than any being but his God.’ ‘I am sure of it,’ she rejoined, ‘and more I would not desire.’ You may well suppose, Henry, that in such a disposition, the persuasions of your father found little obstacle to remove; especially when he produced a letter from our own, informing us of his seclusion from the world, and that he delegated all his authority over us to Mr. Stanley.”

“Has he really gone so far? Then how happened it that he left my father ignorant of your address?”

“He did not himself know it; he had left me, you know, at the Glen, and he had not yet heard of my final purpose; and for Agnes, he supposed that she was still with you at Dover Street.”

“But how came Farquhar to know it?”

“I cannot say; I fancy that he only spoke by guess, having heard that when my father first left England, the Priory was our intended destination. It seems clear that he did not know the name by which we were admitted, or else that he designed his information to Edward to be of no avail. Your father told us that he first heard where we were from yourself, and that he at once perceived that you were foiled by our change of name.”

“He might have had the charity to tell us!”

“ Oh, no doubt, Henry ! it would have been an admirable excuse for another long ride. And then you and Edward have been so very successful in all your judicious steps ; and could have so gracefully informed us of all the benevolent work, in which you had so large a share ! But, how the day has passed ! Your dinner-hour in the country is so early, I have scarcely time left to dress. I, too, want a little information in my turn : we shall have time for it before we reach the house. How do you think that Edward’s father can be brought to receive Agnes ? ”

“ There will be no difficulty at all, I fancy. His prejudice against your religion, though great, disturbed him less than his son’s supposed desertion of his own, even before his illness ; and now he is much subdued, not only by recent suffering, but by an apprehension—not the less powerful that he is loath to avow it—that a similar attack may remove

him suddenly: he is, for this reason, most anxious to see Edward married."

"But there is no property now. Do you think that he would receive her as a daughter, when in actual destitution?"

"I doubt if that would give him a moment's thought: he is wealthy, and Edward is an only child. Like many that I have seen in his own class, he is fond of getting money; not for itself, or from avaricious feeling, but it is success, and success implies energy and talent: it is pride, not avarice, that impels him."

"And he may well be proud of Agnes for a daughter, whatever price he gives for her."

"He may, indeed, Cecilia, for she is the counterpart of you, except that she is a little more discreet, and a little less saucy. He will buy her to ornament his table, on the same principle that he squanders money on his gardens"

“As to my discretion, Mr. Henry Stanley, I have shewn but little, I admit; nor, perhaps, has the saucy example that you have set me this morning, been entirely lost upon me; but—now do be quiet, Henry—you will really oblige me to—there now!—they see us at the drawing-room window!—I’m sure they do!—And I declare your father is opening it to call us in! Really, I never heard the dinner-bell!—Did you, Henry?”

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Are all things well,
According as I gave directions ?”

HENRY VI.

IF any young ladies or gentlemen, who may have done me the honour of reading thus far, flatter themselves that I am going to take the trouble of detailing all the charming little incidents of the ensuing month, they are very much mistaken. Of what interest can it be to them to learn that Agnes tormented poor Edward out of his life with inexhaustible malice, and would fain have made myself and Franklin

suffer too, but that he was imperturbable, and I was vicious, and would now and then retort? Or what avails it to tell of the cruel irony with which Cecilia, when no one else could hear, would taunt me with my propensity for stealing portraits, or rally me on the woe-begone looks of prisoners on their trial? Certainly I found a way of punishing such impertinences, but, like all corporal punishment, it was useless: the jest was reiterated on every convenient occasion, and in every variety of form. And even my gay and artless sister would now and then, at dinner, when it could be done with impunity, tease Franklin about his taste for mustard: I never could learn whether she took the same liberties in private, but I have no doubt she did. In short, my dear juveniles, you know as much of these matters as myself, with the advantage of more recent experience.

Yet it must not be inferred that, even in these early days of exquisite delight, our satis-

faction was unmingled with matters of grave anxiety. ~~My~~ ^{Mar.} were the conversations, not wholly apart from warmth of discussion, between the St. Aubins, Lawrence, and myself, on those serious topics which had so long impeded our respective engagements. If we eventually succeeded in establishing a domestic system advantageous to ourselves, and conducive to family peace, it was because we were firmly united in that strong affection, which alone can efficiently neutralize the jealous acrimony of all religious controversy. We sought for truth, not triumph; and, in the spirit of truthful investigation, willing to concede where concession was not opposed to conscience, and eager to enlighten conscience by the light of Scripture instead of bewildering its power in the dark mazes of dogmatical polemics, we found that there existed many points of paramount importance, on which we all agreed; and but few, and

those of little practical account, where duty compelled us to tread in separate paths. Unanimity is rarely severed from domestic love, whatever may be the opponent influences, for domestic love is the acknowledged prototype of Heaven.

Yet, though we found our own religious principles, thus controlled and harmonized by affection, too truly Catholic to admit of any presentiment of discord, we were long anxious as to the disposition of Edward's father. I had taken upon me, at Edward's request, to explain to him by letter, all that had occurred ; but I received no answer, except a few lines written with mercantile economy of ideas, acknowledging my "advice of yesterday's date," and "taking due notice of its unexpected contents," &c. Edward appreciated this laconic style better than myself, and was not alarmed by it ; but still he could not, in all the enjoyment of his bliss, avoid cherishing some secret

misgivings as to the reception of Agnes in the character of his wife.

I re-assured him by representing that the old man's resentment had been kindled far more by his apostasy than his faith, and that the resolute conduct of Agnes in abjuring the apostate, being founded on the same principle, was certain to win upon his affections. He was not quite satisfied, however, and somewhat selfishly it must be owned—but what lover is not selfish?—urged me to return to London, and prepare the way for him. I owed too much to the kind offices of Agnes to refuse, and yet I should hardly have found the courage to go, but that Cecilia joined in entreating me to accept the office of mediator. I announced my purpose at breakfast, while my father was engaged in opening his letters.

“If you have any business to call you to the Glen or the Priory, you may go, Henry—for you have been wonderfully successful there; but

if not, you will please to stay in your present quarters."

"That's all very well for your son^s, Sir, and for my sister; but unless you mean Edward and myself to take up our abode here too, I fancy you must allow Henry to do the only work he is fit for—preaching to old ladies and gentlemen in a quiet way, over a bottle of wine and a plum-pudding."

"Miss Agnes St. Aubin, I would not have you an inmate of my house for six months, not for all the tallow of all the Russias, unless you were subjected to proper conjugal discipline. You have not allowed us a moment's peace since you entered it; and I see so little chance of improvement, that I start for London within an hour."

"The sooner the better, Sir. Your carpet-bag shall be ready in five minutes."

And Agnes darted out of the room, before Lawrence could interrupt her purpose, giving

him a very audible box on the ear for the attempt. She was not long absent; and while we were still speculating on her motive for this sudden flight, she returned with a sealed letter, and said, throwing it down before Lawrence,

“You will have the goodness to place my despatch in your father’s hands yourself, Edward. You will accompany the governor there, within an hour:—no hesitation, Sir,—you will do as I tell you, unless you want further punishment.”

And she again gave a fillip to his unlucky ear, to intimate that she knew how to inflict it.

“I *am* thankful Agnes. I was dreadfully afraid that you were going with me yourself.”

“And so I should, Sir; but Mrs. Stanley would object to your having so agreeable a companion.”

And then, changing her tone, she added,

“I did at first think of it; but I cannot

intrude, unasked, on Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence, and supplicate them to take a pauper for their daughter."

"Nor will I, Agnes; for I will receive no pauper for my own."

But yet my father said it with so gay a tone that, though he glanced at Cecilia that his remark might not want an application, we troubled ourselves but little with his meaning. He continued :

"Lawrence shall go with me: your suggestion is as proper as it is wise, Agnes. But you must invest me with your authority, and leave it to me to decide when he shall deliver your letter. I can guess its purport; if I am right, its premature delivery may spoil all."

He left us in two hours, accompanied by Lawrence, who looked as wretched as a worthless pointer, about to expiate his faults in a halter! Perhaps Agnes had proved more merciful towards the last, for his countenance did

cheer up a little as he followed my father into the carriage.

Day after day rolled on, and not a word of intelligence came, beyond a line from my father to mention their safe arrival in town. Agnes did not receive a word, and we richly enjoyed the opportunities of retaliation which her disappointment afforded us. "What *will* you give me, Agnes, for even an unfinished letter?" But Agnes knew how to revenge herself more effectually than by retort. "You are going out for a walk, Cecil—as *I* have no better companion, I shall join you and Henry: he will soon find me *de trop*, though he is not exactly the man to carry off his mistress."

"I feel too much compassion for you, Agnes, to leave you alone," replied Cecilia: and they equipped themselves forthwith for a stroll.

"Which way shall we take?"

"Agnes has made the London road her favorite promenade for ten days past," said

Cecilia, and we took the London road accordingly. Such rambles, in such circumstances, are very uninteresting, but how wonderfully love quickens the eyesight! Agnes was the first to discover in the distant horizon a cloud of dust.

“That *must* be the coach!”

“Then it is an hour before its time; a very extraordinary coach, if it is. I suspect it is a flock of sheep.”

“That is only said to vex me, Henry; but it is a coach; I can see four horses: can’t you Cecil?”

“Oh yes! and the colour of the post-boys’ jackets!”

“You are always thinking of post-boys’ jackets, Cecilia; ’twill be long enough before Henry gives you cause: but,”—still straining her eyes in the same direction, and eagerly raising her hand to shade them: “I really believe you are right—they are post-boys I declare! What eyes you have, Cecil! hasn’t she, Henry?”

I proposed returning, but Agnes would *not* return a yard, till she had made out, in all its just proportions, a somewhat old-fashioned barouche, of that hospitable capacity not often witnessed in modern times: its course was checked when it came within fifty yards of us, and Lawrence was instantly beside us. The carriage drove on; as it passed we saw that it was full; but Lawrence and Agnes had already lagged behind, and increased the interval at every step, so that we reached the house before we were introduced by my father to Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence!

I had never before seen my father in such an anxious, bustling, hurrying humour: he hastened dinner—he rattled at every door to hurry dressing—he ordered and countermanded servants in all directions; the carriage was to be at the door that evening—and then it was not to be at the door till the next morning, by seven o'clock: four special messengers were

collected from the village, nobody knew for what purpose or whither to be sent; and even when at last, we found ourselves all seated at table, (Agnes being the last by ten minutes, and curiously enough, colouring, blushing, silent and confused, while Lawrence looked more like a fool than ever I had done,) in came whispered messages, cards, memorandums on slips of paper, more than once followed by my father's sudden exit and prompt return. My mother was, if possible, more unaccountable still; for she sat silent and composed, yet with looks lighted up, and sparkling eyes, which declared as plainly as eyes could do, that if she did not speak audibly, it was not for want of words. Mrs. Lawrence was, as usual, good humoured and voluble, but somewhat unusually prim; while her husband fed with as much self-complacency as at home, sparing every useless word that might interfere with the occupation, except his accustomed "Glass of wine, Stanley."

How impatiently we waited for the servants' egress! No sooner were we left to ourselves than question and speculation burst from all quarters. What could it all mean? What had they been about? What were they going to do next? But the governor was inexorable.

"You got my letter the day before yesterday, my dear?"

"Oh yes!" answered my mother, "and followed out all your directions."

"I see how it is, Agnes, you are to be married out of hand; I rejoice at it: we shall have a quiet house at last."

"Don't count too much upon that, Henry; you are likely to live together for some time yet: but what's become of Agnes?"

She had left the room before my father had asked the question, and Lawrence had disappeared as well; but the rest of us were all attention, hoping for the explanation which his last remark implied.

How very tedious elderly gentlemen are, when they have anything to explain! We had been silent and all expectation for full two minutes; even old Lawrence had deliberately sipped his glass, instead of exhausting it at a draught; Cecilia and my sisters looked alternately at "papa" and "mamma," and the latter affected the look demure, which, without any breach of filial duty—may I say it—sat very ill upon her intelligent face. That excellent fellow, Franklin, like a good, honest soul as he is, was the only one who seemed to know what he was about, and quietly reminded the governor that "the bottle" stood. The memento produced the much desired explanation.

"Farquhar is a great rascal, Henry."

"Apostate!" grunted Lawrence.

"No better than he should be," chimed in his wife.

"Would do the devil," exclaimed Franklin.

"But he has not done *me*," rejoined my

father ; “ he borrowed your money, Henry, and Lawrence’s fifty pounds, (old Lawrence groaned) to do the lawyers, instead of going abroad, and so I thought ; but the conveyance of Glen Cottage and all its pretty farms to monastic uses, is not worth a button here. Cecilia and Agnes, (don’t look so glorious, Cecil, I have something to say yet that will mortify you,) these foolish girls are entitled to the whole ; and Farquhar is so well convinced of it by this time, that he will resign possession three days hence, but—it is a very awkward circumstance—young girls without husbands are not up to business—it’s nonsense blushing, Cecil, I have not spent ten days in town for nothing—settlements are ready ; Farquhar, though I gave him a hundred pounds, will only yield possession to the better sex, marriage (as he says) being in contemplation ; in short, you must be married to-morrow, to take the man in his humour before he flies to the continent, and receive

possession of Glen Cottage as soon as you can get there."

"Very pleasant," muttered Franklin, "pleasant and satisfactory."

"What are you grumbling about, Captain? I have three licences in my pocket; it is as easy to join three couples as two! And what's more to the purpose, I have three settlements as well as licences;" but long before this consolation to the Captain, which by the way, sent him out of the room as quickly as the rest of them, all the feminines had absconded with such precipitation, that old Lawrence himself scarcely retained sufficient table composure, to propose a "glass to the ladies."

I have forgotten precisely what I did myself, nor am I quite sure that I ever knew. My father, with all the mischief of a boy of fifteen, and feeling fully assured that we were all ready for any emergency, had determined on the frolic of surprising us into marriage at four-

and-twenty hours' notice, nor was my indulgent mamma at all more averse to the frolic than himself. He had taken the precaution of writing to her two days previously, to make such preparation, as she could manage, secretly ; but how little can be effected in two days towards launching three couples for life !

CHAPTER XIV.

“ I know thou art religious,
And hast a thing within thee, called conscience,
With twenty popish tricks and ceremonies,
Which I have seen thee careful to observe.”

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

It is difficult, even for the shrewdest man, to provide against all the accidents that may derange a well-laid plot! My father had laid his plans skilfully, with the honest intention of surprising us into a dilemma, from which the only extrication appeared to be found in what, for want of a better term, I may be allowed to call a triune marriage; but, with all his sagacity, he had not calculated on a formal

difficulty, arising from the difference of religious creed ; and a difficulty which, under the circumstances, could not easily be surmounted. Cecilia and Agnes held a council on the subject as soon as they fled from the dining-room, on the first development of the paternal scheme, and were engaged in discussion till a late hour, while Lawrence and myself were as busily employed in excited and bewildered preparations for the happiness of the morrow, little dreaming of the disappointment that awaited us !

Such was the helter-skelter confusion of the whole establishment, that supper had been on the table for two hours, before a sufficient party could be assembled to partake of it. At length we were all collected, except Franklin and the intended brides, congratulating ourselves and each other on our prospects, and Lawrence's father especially congratulating himself on the more immediate prospect of one more quiet glass to the health of everybody and everything,

when Franklin burst into the room, with an unwonted expression of irritation on his features, and exclaiming, in a voice of mingled anger and impatience,

“It won’t do—it’s no go after all! The devil’s in those girls; they never know what they would be at!”

Had a thunderbolt fallen among us, it could scarcely have occasioned more confusion; all were on their feet in an instant—every mouth opened on the Captain for immediate explanation, and even Mr. Lawrence put down his glass untasted.

“No go!—What do you mean?”

“You must ask them, if they know themselves; all I know is, that one and all swear they won’t be married to-morrow!”

“Won’t be married? But they *shall*, if a parson’s to be found, as surely as my name is Lawrence; what say you, Ned?”

My mother and Mrs. Lawrence immediately

retired, to obtain information at the fountain head ; when Franklin told us that the result of their consultation was, as he had just learned from my sister, that the marriage ceremony must, in the first instance, be performed by a priest of their own church, to satisfy the scruples of the St. Aubins. My father looked blank, while old Lawrence was evidently working himself up into a storm.

“ On my word, I believe those fellows would not let a child be born without their special leave, if they could help it ! Won’t it satisfy them if the girls are married again next day ? ”

“ That can’t be ; it seems that the priest will not go through the ceremony, if they have been married previously.”

“ Well ! to a plain man, this does seem arrant nonsense ; their priest then, says, the first marriage is good, and the girls say it is good for nothing ! Heaven help my weak head ; I shall

never understand a Papist ! Once married seems enough, in all conscience !”

And resuming his untasted glass, Mr. Lawrence exhausted it without another word, and settled down into a sullen silence, which he did not again break except to wish good night.

My father was obviously disappointed and perplexed ; but he was a man who thought for himself, and decided for himself, and therefore, neither asked advice, offered any, but taking his candle, he simply said to Franklin,

“ This does not affect you, Captain, at all events ; so we will have one wedding to-morrow, if we can’t have three ; by the morning I shall know better what to do, for I fear there’s not a Roman priest to be had within twenty miles of us for love or money.”

There is no occasion of domestic festivity so dull and *ennuyant* as a wedding, except to the principal parties. Now and then, some whimsical casualty occurs, to give rise to a little fun ;

I recollect an instance of this kind some years years ago, when a pair of high-mettled horses ran away with the bridal carriage, in the opposite direction to the church. This delayed the ceremony till nearly noon; and it might have been as well, as circumstances turned out, if it had been deferred for ever, for the fair bride well deserved a happier lot. Stale jokes, dull speeches, and a hurried dinner, passed in forced hilarity, is all the ordinary entertainment of the subordinate actors in such scenes. It may be imagined that, although, the next morning, bells were ringing, tenants parading, and every fowling-piece in the parish, down to the child's pop-gun, echoing in all directions, from the first hour of dawn, neither Lawrence nor myself was likely to be amusing or amused. If I must tell the honest truth, I doubt if either Cecilia or Agnes felt perfectly satisfied with the stern duty which conscience had imposed; indeed, there was but one in the whole party, except Franklin, who

appeared thoroughly to enjoy himself, and that one was my father.

By seven o'clock, though we had not retired to bed till nearly two, he was at every door, summoning us with an impatience which he confessed that he had never felt since the day of his own nuptials, and, to our surprise, we found on assembling in the drawing-room, that the wedding breakfast was intended to precede the ceremony! These things *can* be done in the country, whatever town etiquette may decree, though the immediate necessity for such a deviation from accustomed rule on the present occasion was not very obvious, unless it were to enable him to soothe the disappointed feelings of most of the party, by bestowing his benedictions, as well as his congratulations, upon all the "intended" unions, with equal justice and propriety. So it was, however, and early as was the hour for the customary libations, they were duly performed in the accustomed nectar, to the

real satisfaction of the elder Lawrence. No needless rhetoric was permitted; nor was too much time allowed for more essential operations; the Franklins had a long journey before them, and it was determined that they should still proceed to the Glen, and save time by starting from the church door; hence, even before the clock had sounded nine, the street of our little village resounded with huzzas, in honour of Captain and Mrs. Franklin, and away they drove in all the triumphant complacency of the first day of connubial bliss! The triumph may be forgotten, but the complacency bids fair to survive their earthly existence, as it seems to increase every year in the exact ratio of their family.

Notwithstanding our hearts sincerely responded to their joy, it was not possible that Cecilia and myself should face the attendant crowd without some feeling of annoyance, as the whisper had gone abroad that our own marriage

had been postponed. Lawrence and Agnes shared this feeling, and we had resolved to steal away quietly through the chancel door, and walk home across the fields; but we were watched more closely than we supposed: my father arrested us before we had proceeded a hundred yards, and, taking one of the girls under each arm, insisted on our returning to the carriages.

“I part with no more of you to-day,” he said; “to-morrow you may go where you please.”

Nor would he listen to my expostulations, though earnestly urged; there was no alternative but to follow him, as he led us back through the noisy mob, who still huzzaed, though they knew not why; nor were their affectionate salutations at all more agreeable to my ear, that many of them were accompanied with the kind counsel, “Cheer up, Mr. Henry! ’twill be your turn next!”

That the matrimonial service ends in “amaze-

ment," we all know, but who shall describe the amazement felt by us who had yet to go through it, when we perceived at the gate the antiquated barouche of Mr. Lawrence, and our own family carriage, each piled up with luggage, and with four post horses substituted for our own, waiting to receive us, in obvious anticipation of a long journey, and a distant destination ! My father's keen eye glanced at each of us, as if to prescribe silence, while it lighted up a proud smile of self-approbation, and Lawrence and I exchanged a look so joyous and bright, as to supersede the necessity of much verbal explanation. Still I could not resist the question, "Where are we going?" It was not till we were all seated, and bowling away at fourteen miles an hour, that my governor deigned to answer,

"To the Priory ! We shall find priests enough there to marry a score of us. We forgot last night, that the licences were special, and hours of no account ; our early breakfast leaves us

ample time, if those boys don't spare the spur !”

What matters it to prosecute my tale? to describe the blushing smiles of Cecilia, or the subdued, though still irrepressible archness of Agnes, as we exchanged a few words on changing horses, during our rapid journey? For, to prevent any “Jesuitical conspiracy,” as my father called it, he had judiciously separated them before they knew his object, and Agnes travelled in Mr. Lawrence’s carriage. I might fill another volume with the details of this eventful day, the conclusion of which crowned our happiness; for my father, never more pleased than when advancing a scheme of domestic pleasure, had dispatched a courier with letters, at an early hour, to make such arrangements as precluded a second disappointment, and he was quite successful. Ere the following day closed in, our whole party was re-united at Glen Cottage, though standing in different, and yet

dearer relations to each other ; while, as if to give what aid he could to happiness that he could no longer prevent, Farquhar had resigned possession to Franklin on his arrival, and then disappeared, nor have I since heard of him except that he found it convenient to become a Mahometan, to qualify himself for office at Constantinople. Some rumours, indeed, stated that he became a convert to Judaism ; probably both reports were true.

“ And for what conceivable purpose have you imposed such a tax on the patience of the public, as to inflict upon us two weary volumes of fictitious narrative and dull controversy ? The merit of an autobiography is its truth, for the utility of it is its practical example.”

This question has been put to me already,

and I may well anticipate the repetition of it by less partial readers. I hope my answer may be as satisfactory to others, as it has been to that private circle whose affectionate approbation has long sustained me, in controversies more bitter, and against criticisms more severe and more unjust, than any that are likely to be visited upon mere sins of authorship.

It is scarcely possible for any man to remain an uninterested observer of the singular circumstances that characterize the progress of Religion in the present day. The same free-thinking, self-thinking habit which, from the Reformation, has marked our national character, and which, if at some periods of our history it has largely assisted the promulgation of an infidel philosophy, has, on the whole, materially advanced the cause of truth, has latterly occasioned much eccentric movement in the very bosom of our Established Church. The agitation began in two very opposite quarters, almost

simultaneously ; it has, naturally, assumed a variety of form, according to the direction of the impulse in which it originated ; yet I believe that, on close examination, it will be found that, in reference to their ultimate tendency, the revived controversy of Apostolic succession, and the apparently novel doctrines of the followers of Mr. Irving, are identified. It is not the least curious feature of the case that in both instances, these seceders from the Church, (and I fear that they are far more numerous than is commonly supposed,) insist that they are only returning to the true construction of our liturgy, and to the simplicity that distinguished the primitive Church of Christ, in the pure form of the Apostolic age. That this is the common allegation of every sectarian is notorious ; nor is it less so that the first adherents to every new religious doctrine, are usually distinguished, not less by their moral excellence, than by the severe constancy with which they

maintain their point ; it is not among the timid or the licentious, that we are to look for first seceders, when secession is vindicated on the plea of conscience.

Nor does the resemblance end here ; I believe that it is an ill-natured libel on the present character of Mr. Irving's Church, though it certainly was one of the wild vagaries in which that clever enthusiast and some of his earliest followers indulged, to charge upon them a belief in mysterious prophecies and miraculous interpretation : had such absurdities been long maintained, they would long ere this have led to the utter extinction of the sect. They are necessarily suicidal of every faith that professes to rest upon them.

But it certainly is a fundamental tenet, on which their separation is based, that the operations of the Third Person in the Holy Trinity are instant, irresistible, and, in some cases, vouchsafed to be apparent : that the

ministers of the gosp^l are peculiarly indued with His Holy Spirit, not by any process of human ordination, but by the constant and perpetual pouring forth of sacred dew; that in this there is nothing preternatural—nothing even extraordinary, but that it is a doctrine which flows from Scripture, as the stream from its fountain, and is adopted by our Church throughout her liturgy—that it is rejected only by those who are cold formalists, and do not honestly desire that sanctification of heart and ~~purity~~ of motive, which inevitably result from a thorough conviction of the pervading, unceasing activity of the Holy Ghost, in the daily transactions of life.

Such, I collect, from conversation with many members of Mr. Irving's church, to be the distinctive trait of their doctrine; and I own that I do not find it easy to draw a very clear line of demarcation between this creed and the faith in Apostolic succession: the

holy inspiration of the priest-hood is in both cases the same, though a difference obtains as to the manner of its acquisition: in both cases the same practical results follow, of reverential affection to the person, and absolute submission to the authority, of the man thus recognised and adopted by God as the legitimate expounder of His commands, and the acknowledged minister of His ordinances. I believe, too, though I should be very sorry to misrepresent them in any way, that while the followers of Mr. Irving entirely agree with the Established Church, in taking the Scriptures as the only safe guide to conscience, they recognise in the priest an infallible interpreter of Scripture, because, as they maintain, the Holy Spirit, by his mouth, is addressing the congregation.

It is remarkable that among the numerous secessions of our clergy, (they have been represented to me, on good authority, to

amount to nearly two hundred, within a very few years,) the seceders have all gone over, either to the Roman Church, or to that of Mr. Irving; and, so far as we are publicly informed of their motives, they rest upon this assumed spirituality of the priest. There are not many indeed, who have ventured to avow it in explicit terms; but, however the explanation may be cloaked in ambiguity of language, it will be found, on close examination, to resolve itself into this: nor could a more plausible argument have been invented by those who seek to alienate them from their Church, than that which would persuade them that a secession which the world calls, Apostasy, is, in truth and in fact, only a dutiful return to the faith and the example of the Apostolic Fathers, as inculcated by the fathers of our reformation, and the compilers of our liturgy.

When such a departure from the religious

faith of our childhood is honestly enjoined by the dictates of a conscience, well informed in the Bible, and thoroughly enlightened by sound instruction, God forbid that any man should seek to thwart or oppose it. We are assured that the day shall come when all men shall be of one mind and one hope; perhaps unity of faith and spirit, and therefore, of worship, is, by God's pleasure, at this moment progressing; and accelerated by that ardent enquiry into the constitution of the true Church to which these frequent secessions partly owe their rise, and which they, most assuredly, tend to promote. This is a mystery into which we may reverently enquire, but which the historical experience of future ages only can unravel.

But it admits of no dispute that the church of Rome is eagerly on the watch to avail herself of this favourable opportunity of recalling her long-lost flock, and of recalling them not

only to allegiance, but to error; nor can we view her large and stately churches, towering around us in all directions, where, till a recent day, all the outward insignia of her worship, the spires, the peal of bells, and the robed procession were forbidden, without feeling that she wants neither the means to receive her proselytes, nor proselytes to warrant the liberal expenditure of her means: we need not the reports of the daily papers to confirm the position; those who are acquainted with the state of our universities, are fully aware of the extent to which the undergraduates have been inoculated with the Tractarian virus, but are not, perhaps, as well acquainted with the distress and anxiety which have thereby been introduced into many happy homes.

Circumstances not necessary to detail, have made me familiar with the present tone of feeling among the junior classes at Cambridge, and have satisfied me that a very large majority

of those who affect conversion to Tractarian principles, are led away either by the seduction of pious romance, or by the far less excusable impulse of a love of notoriety ; but I believe that, in both cases, the thoughtlessness of youth, combined with very superficial enquiry into the merits of the controversy, has induced a facility of change which deeper reflection would have resisted. It might have been reasonably expected that the Heads of our Church would have stood prominently forward to check the growing evil, by a clear and manly declaration of the limits beyond which our Protestant faith could not stray without entering the Roman pale: this has not yet been done, and on the contrary, the few Episcopal charges which have hitherto touched upon the point, have, so far as they have been made public to laymen, left every matter in dispute more complicated and more unsettled than they found it: no doubt it was

very difficult to place the question in its true light, without peril to the deference due to ecclesiastical authority ; no doubt it was a delicate task at once to disclaim the *traditional* inspiration of our clergy, (the vital qualification of the Roman priesthood,) and to insist on the evidence of *immediate* inspiration evinced by a holy life, of which six sevenths are spent between partridges and puppy-dogs, quarter sessions and county balls. Under such circumstances, it was more prudent to evade ~~the~~ question than to meet it : had I been a bishop, I should have taken the same course, and have been only too glad to escape the real issue, by discreet pastoral injunctions respecting oblations, surplices, and candlesticks.

In the absence of all canonical authority, our youth in training for the Church must determine for themselves ; and, to determine rightly, they must think deeply ; my object is to lead

them to this, by shewing to them, in a popular form, that apostasy in itself, and abstractedly from conscientious conviction, is odious and contemptible : that, *prima facie*, it is self-damnatory ; and especially, that Tractarian secession is based upon views that involve no change of essential doctrine, while they inevitably lead to dangerous errors in practice. I may be wrong, or I may be right ; it is of little consequence, provided I can lead others to see that there does exist matter for serious enquiry, on which they should consult their spiritual teachers, ~~and yet~~ more, their Bible and their conscience, before they resolve upon their course.

As regards the execution, I feel that some of the characters are given with less dramatic effect than is desirable in a work of fiction ; nor am I unconscious that the structure of the whole is largely deficient in conception ; but, while I acknowledge faults for which my inexperience and inability are to blame, I may be allowed to

extenuate them by adding, that the narrative is not entirely fictitious, and in my anxiety to render it practically useful, I have been desirous to adhere as nearly to truth as circumstances would permit.

There are two or three passages in which I may have expressed myself with a severity of tone that will offend some members of the sacred profession; if such offence be taken, I fear that it is the natural irritation of self reproach, and that the conscience of the offended party is more to blame for it than I; for while, on the one hand, I should blush for my own want of moral courage, if I flinched from the expression of my opinion on the palpable defects of some of our clergy, so, on the other, I can truly disclaim any intended personality.

I have heard it publicly asserted as a fact, that four-fifths of the game certificates taken out in one of the largest counties in England,

are obtained by clergymen ! It might be worth the while of some Parliamentary opponent of the game laws, to move for a return that would test the truth of this assertion ; it certainly would well become some of our Spiritual Lords to do so. It is, however, quite notorious that a large proportion of our country magistrates are clergymen ; and this is an occupation, if less frivolous than sporting, not at all more befitting our priesthood. Very few of them are qualified by knowledge of the world, or of law, to be useful magistrates ; and were it otherwise, no poor parishioner would be the more disposed to regard his pastor with the affection and the reverence due to his sacred office, because that pastor is compelled to take judicial notice of his poaching or drinking propensities. Great improvement has, undoubtedly, been effected of late years, in the clerical character ; but yet there is ample room for self-reform, especially in pastoral zeal—in humble

accessibility—and, above all, in sober consistency of private, with official life. Until this reform is effected, the Church can never exclaim, with justice, against dissent, even where dissent is carried to the extent of actual apostasy.

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